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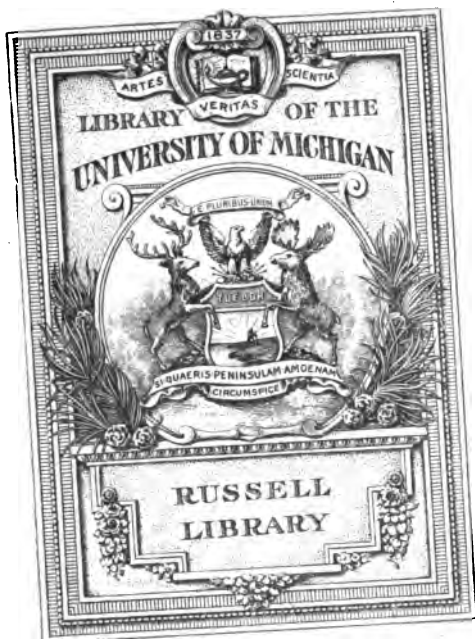
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THE
DIFFICULTIES
OF
ROMANISM.

BY
GEORGE STANLEY FABER, B. D.
RECTOR OF LONG-NEWTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE DIFFICULTIES OF INFIDELITY."

"Peræque adversus universas hæreses jam hinc præjudicatum sit: id esse
verum, quodcunque primam; id esse adulterum, quodcunque posterius."

Tertull. adv. Prax. § ii. Oper. p. 405.

PHILADELPHIA:
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1829.



6-19-33 SWB

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
NICHOLAS, LORD BEXLEY,

AS

A TOKEN OF SINCERE RESPECT BOTH FOR HIS PUBLIC
SERVICES AND HIS PRIVATE VIRTUES,

THIS MANUAL

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

AT various intervals, during the course of some years past, my attention has been turned to that part of the Latin controversy, which respects *the evidence afforded by the early ecclesiastical writers*.

I. It appeared to me, that, on all the great leading points of divinity, those who conversed with the apostles, and those who lived nearest to the times of the apostles, must best have known the mind of the apostles. Whence it seemed to follow, that, if the Latin church really possessed that immutability of character which is so constantly claimed on her behalf, all those various doctrines and practices, which many persons are wont to deem corruptions of the truth, must have subsisted from the apostolic age itself, and might therefore be clearly discovered in the productions of all the early ecclesiastics.

Such a testimony as this in favour of the Roman system of theology, should it actually exist, would be so powerful, that it is difficult to conceive how it could be reasonably set aside: for, if all the ancient writers, with one voice, up to the very time of the apostles, taught and maintained, as the familiar and acknowledged doctrines and practices of the primitive catholic church, those identical doctrines and practices which

are now taught and maintained by the church of Rome ; I see not how we can avoid the inference, that those doctrines and practices rest ultimately upon the inspired authority of the apostles themselves.

II. It is obvious, that, in collecting evidence of this description, we require, as a point indispensably necessary to constitute its validity, both *the unbroken continuity of the chain of witnesses*, and *the strict mutual harmony of the witnesses themselves*.

Unless the chain of witnesses extend to the apostolic age, the evidence is incomplete : and, since its whole strength depends upon its completeness, if incomplete, it is altogether worthless.

To discover any peculiar doctrine or practice of the Latin church, in the works (we will say) of a writer of the *fourth* century, will be of no avail, unless the same doctrine and practice be also recognised, in orderly succession, by a train of yet earlier writers *from the very beginning*. The attested existence of the doctrine or practice in the *fourth* century will indeed prove its *relative antiquity* : but this will not afford to us any satisfactory proof of its *apostolic origination*. An error, which sprang up at that early period, is not the less an error, because, by lapse of time, it has *now* become ancient. With a reference to the apostolic age, it is still *an innovation* : nor does its *relative antiquity* on the one hand obliterate its indelible character of *relative novelty* on the other hand. We cannot justly admit any peculiar doctrine or practice of the Latin church to be *apostolic*, unless it can be regularly traced, step by step, *up to the time of the apostles*. If, while a suspicious silence pervades all the writings of the three *earlier* centuries, a doctrine or practice be mentioned

for the first time in the *fourth* century ; we must not deem the novel and unsupported testimony of a later age sufficient to justify the church of Rome in maintaining that such doctrine or practice existed from the very beginning. *Whatever is first, is true*, says Tertullian : *whatever is more recent, is spurious*. This being the case, if a doctrine or practice, mentioned in the fourth century, be not only left altogether unmentioned by writers of an earlier date ; but if it be even contradicted and dissallowed by them : then, *à fortiori*, that doctrine or practice must assuredly be, with reference to the apostolic age, an unauthorized and untenable innovation.

Thus manifest is it, that any evidence from antiquity, which can be brought in favour of the peculiar doctrines and practices of the Roman Church, is of no worth, in regard to proving their *apostolic origination*, unless an unbroken chain of witnesses extend to the apostolic age, and unless all the successive witnesses themselves strictly harmonize together.

III. Before we can bring the system of the church of Rome to this reasonable test, we must ascertain what that system actually is.

Protestants have often been charged with giving a false colour to the opinions of the Latins : and it is far from impossible (such is the infirmity of human nature), that, in the violence of controversy, each party may have dealt unfairly with the other. I have now before me a tract of the seventeenth century, said to have been written by Mr. Gother ; which, enforcing this identical allegation, bears the inculpatory title of *A Papist misrepresented and represented*. Without entering into the merits of that composition, this at least we must

say, that, first to charge a *Latin* with what he holds not, and then gravely to confute opinions which all the while he strenuously disclaims, is alike unfair and unprofitable. In discussing the doctrinal system of the Roman church, an honest inquirer will take for his text-book, not the allegations of a protestant polemic, but some work of credit, written by an esteemed and responsible *Latin* himself. Thus acting, he will see what the members of the Roman church profess to hold: and, unless he can bring proof from authoritative documents that his author disingenuously garbles the real opinions of his own communion, the sentiments to be brought to the test of antiquity are the sentiments avowed in a work of this respectable description.

IV. While such thoughts occupied my mind, an English gentleman of family and fortune, with whom I have not the advantage of being personally acquainted, forwarded to me, from the south of France, in the spring of the current year, a copy of a recent publication by M. Trévern, formerly vicar-general of Langres, and now bishop of Aire.

The copy, thus transmitted to me, was accompanied by a letter: in which my correspondent spoke in the highest terms of the bishop's personal character; represented his work, as having produced a very considerable sensation among the travelling English laity; and, with a degree of earnestness which I could scarcely have anticipated, requested me to answer it.

1. On perusing the very able publication of the learned and excellent prelate, I found its chief characteristic to be that of a *studied vindication* of the church of Rome, and a *studied attack* upon the church of England.

(1.) In vindicating the doctrines and practices of the church of Rome, the bishop distinctly states, what, in his judgment, those doctrines and practices really are. Such being the case, I immediately perceived that I had here the identical text-book which I required : for, in his lordship's work, I might safely study the system of the Latin church, not as distorted by the prejudices of an enemy, but as exhibited in its true colours by a dignified ecclesiastic, to whom in all its bearings it could not but be perfectly familiar.

(2.) Interested as I was on this account in the bishop's publication, I was yet additionally interested in it by the circumstance, that the same train of reasoning from *the evidence of antiquity*, which had passed through my own mind, had likewise passed through the mind of the bishop. This reasoning, which to myself appears so natural and so unobjectionable, he makes, in fact, the very basis of his work : for his general argument, in favour of the church of Rome and against the church of England, may be briefly stated in manner following :—

Those who conversed with the apostles, and those who lived nearest to the times of the apostles, must best have known the mind of the apostles. With these primitive theologians, the church of Rome agrees, and the church of England disagrees. Therefore the former must teach the truth, while the latter teaches falsehood.

2. Thus runs the bishop's argument : and thus, in evolving his argument does he state and vindicate what he himself defines to be the doctrines and practices of the church of Rome. On both these accounts, therefore, I was deeply interested by his lordship's *Amicable Discussion* : and henceforth I determined to

adopt its authoritative statement of the Latin system, as the unimpeachable basis of a work, which should exhibit to the English laity the formidable *Difficulties of Romanism*, even on the ground assumed by the bishop himself.

His lordship asserts, that, in all those peculiar doctrines and practices, which so grievously offend the members of the Anglican church, and which he himself specifies and explains with sufficient precision, the firm and immutable church of Rome perfectly agrees with those primitive theologians, who either conversed with the apostles, or who lived nearest to the times of the apostles: whence he contends, that the church of Rome, unlike the innovating church of England, still teaches and still acts, as the catholic church of Christ has ever taught and has ever acted *from the very beginning*.

By this process, the question is resolved, as it ought to be resolved, into A NAKED HISTORICAL MATTER OF FACT, and, accordingly, the sole point to be decided is, *whether the doctrines and practices of the Roman church, as propounded and explained and vindicated by the bishop of Aire himself, have or have not the unbroken sanction of all primitive antiquity.*

Such then is the ground, a ground of his lordship's own selection, on which I am in no wise reluctant to take up the discussion: and, when the early ecclesiastical writers up to the time of the apostles shall have been examined somewhat more fully, perhaps also somewhat more impartially, than the bishop has performed the task, I greatly mistake, if the alleged immutable church of Rome will not stand convicted of palpable innova-

tion, and thence (according to Tertullian's canon) of manifest error.

V. Unwilling to waste my strength and my time in a mere ephemeral controversy, talked of to-day and forgotten to-morrow, I have endeavoured to impress upon my work the character of PERMANENT UTILITY. Had the bishop of Aire never undertaken the defence of the church of Rome at the expense of the church of England; still a work, in which *the claims of the peculiar doctrines and practices of the Latin church to the support of primitive antiquity* are considered with some measure of fulness, can never, so long as truth is valuable, be useless and unseasonable. When a Roman ecclesiastic perplexes an English laymen by boldly asserting the strict accordance of his church with the church nearest to the times of the apostles, it is desirable, that the layman, without the trouble of any very extended research imposed upon *himself*, should be provided with a reply.

1. A *wish*, says my intelligent correspondent, *to be able to answer the questions, repeatedly and triumphantly proposed by the catholics upon topics of this description, is everywhere now reigning.*

Thus speaks a well-informed layman from actual experience: the object of my work is to furnish an easy reply to such questions, not merely in the present day, but at any future period whatsoever.

2. *Your own theologians*, says the bishop of Aire to his English friend, *no less than ourselves, have in their hands the ancient liturgies of the primitive church and the works of the early ecclesiastical writers: but they will have small inclination, I suspect, to bring you acquainted with such documents. Ask them to communicate these*

*documents to you : desire them to specify the opinions which they express. You will soon find, that they take your request with no very good grace : and, in truth, to deal plainly with you, it is impossible that they should. Ah well, Sir, I will spare them their embarrassment: and, so far as you are concerned, I will go on to accomplish their defective ministrations.**

Thus speaks a learned prelate of the Latin Church : the object of my work is to furnish a permanent answer to the supposed embarrassing questions, which, at his lordship's suggestion, the English laity might propound to the English clergy.

VI. In discussing the difficulties of Romanism on the professed ground of primitive antiquity, an obstacle occurred, which, to a person situated so disadvantageously as myself, might well have appeared altogether insurmountable.

To work without tools is impossible : the tools, absolutely necessary for an undertaking of this description, are the works of the primitive fathers, the early ecclesiastical histories, and the acts of those councils which claim to be ecumenical : and it is not the lot of every painful student to be enrolled among those highly-privileged divines, who, by their connexion with colleges or with cathedrals, can leisurely expatiate in the free use of such requisite instruments.

As for myself, buried in the deep oblivion of a sequestered northern village, possessing only a limited collection of the ancient ecclesiastical writers, and from local circumstances unable to profit by the rich stores of a collegiate library of reference, I should have found

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 8.

it *physically impossible* to execute the task which has been imposed upon me, had not the means been supplied after a mode, which, in the ordinary course of rustic life, could not rationally have been anticipated. More ample opportunities might probably have rendered my work less imperfect: yet, with some trifling exceptions, the copious library of a valued clerical friend, united with my own, left me but little to desire. Mr. Anstey will, I hope, permit a neighbour of twenty years to say, that the service, which he rendered to me, was only surpassed by the manner in which that service was rendered.

VII. The present work is a work of *defence*, not of *attack*: for I claim to possess the advantage of appearing in the light of a blameless *defendant*, not of an unprovoked *assailant*.

When a Roman ecclesiastic, however excellent and venerable his character may be, spontaneously assaults the church of England; and when he attempts to proselyte her members on the specious but insecure plea, that, *because* she has rejected certain doctrines and practices of the Latin church, she has *therefore* departed from primitive antiquity: it becomes a matter of strict defence to shew, by incontrovertible testimony, that the *really* innovating church is not the church of England, but the church of Rome.

VIII. In prosecuting the subject which I have been induced to take in hand, I felt the want of a term, which should express both accurately and compendiously *the system of doctrine and practice maintained by the church of Rome*.

1. The word *popery* I was unwilling to employ: both because I have no inclination to give needless offence;

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and because the marked difference of opinion in regard to the papal authority, which subsists between the Cisalpines and the Transalpines, has rendered that word not *universally* proper.

2. On the other hand, the word *catholicism* I could not employ : because such a term, when nakedly and exclusively applied to the theological system of the western Latin church, has always appeared to me most singularly incorrect.

That the Latins are catholics in the same sense that the Greeks and the Armenians and the Syrians and the Abyssinians and the English are catholics ; in other words, that the Latins constitute one of the many branches of Christ's Universal Church ; I am far from wishing to deny : but, when a *generic* name is applied *specifically* to a single particular branch, this palpable inaccuracy of nomenclature can only produce a correspondent erroneousness of conception.

The name *catholic* belongs EQUALLY to ALL the members of Christ's catholic church, wherever dispersed and however distressed. Hence a name, which belongs EQUALLY to ALL whether oriental or occidental, cannot be correctly employed, as the *special* and *exclusive* and *descriptive* appellation of A PART only : because, when the term is *thus* used, the common character of catholicism is by implication *denied* to every christian, who happens not to be a member of that provincial western church which is in communion with the bishop of Rome, and which acknowledges him as its chief or patriarch.

3. Rejecting then the two words *popery* and *catholicism* for reasons which to myself appeared fully sufficient, I have adopted the unexceptionable term *Ro-*

manism : and I wish to be understood as employing it to designate *the peculiar system of doctrine and practice, which the church of Rome in all her branches maintains and inculcates.*

IX. Not ignorant of the impatient indolence of an age which claims to have discovered the long-hidden royal road to knowledge, I have laboured to be brief: yet, aware at the same time that in one mode only can the discussion be satisfactorily conducted, I have endeavoured to condense within small space no small quantity of matter.

Should it please God to render this manual for the English laity extensively and permanently useful, I shall have my reward. The opprobrium is at least avoided, that the English clergy, by their silence, have accepted a Latin offer to *spare them their embarrassment, and to accomplish their defective ministrations.*

LONG-NEWTON RECTORY,

Sept. 17, 1825.

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THE DIFFICULTIES ATTENDANT UPON THE CHURCH OF ROME, IN REGARD TO HER PECULIAR DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES.

Certe sacramenta quæ sumimus, corporis et sanguinis Domini, divina res est ; propter quod et per eadem divinæ efficimur consortes naturæ. Et tamen esse non desinit substantia vel natura panis et vini : et certe imago et similitudo corporis et sanguinis Christi in actione mysteriorum celebrantur.—*Papa Gelas. de Duab. Christ. Natur. cont. Nestor. et Eutych. in Biblioth. Patr. vol. iv. p. 422.*

Spiritualiter intelligite quod locutus sum. Non hoc corpus, quod videtis, mandicaturi estis ; nec bibituri illum sanguinem, quem fusuri sunt qui me crucifigent. Sacramentum aliquod vobis commendavi : spiritualiter intellectum vivificabit vos.—*August. Enarr. in Psalm. xcvi. Oper. vol. viii. p. 397. Colon. 1616.*

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Statement.

APOSTOLIC antiquity, and unbending immutability, are the peculiar boast of the church of Rome.

I. So far as *bare ecclesiastical existence* is concerned, no person will be disposed to controvert its apostolic antiquity; for Scripture itself bears witness to the fact of its *existence*, even while the great Evangelist of the gentiles was still alive; and, according to the competent testimony of Irenæus, it was founded by persons of no less dignity than the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul, who by their joint authority, constituted Linus its first bishop.* But the fact of its alleged *immutability* rests upon a foundation by no means equally secure.

Whatever is first, says Tertullian, is true; whatever is more recent is spurious.†

To the severe test of this primitive canon, we must ultimately bring the lofty pretensions of the Latin church. The real question is not, *whether many of its doctrines and practices be not of very remote antiquity*; but the real question is, *whether they can claim such antiquity as reaches to the age of approving apostolic authority*. Unless a chain can be constructed, which shall bind the modern church of Rome to the primitive church of Christ, the mere *comparative* antiquity of its peculiar doctrines and practices will assuredly avail nothing.

* Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3.

† Tertull. adv. Prax. § ii. p. 405.

The connecting link will be wanted: and, let such doctrines and such practices have been introduced when they may, still, since they cannot be shown to have existed *from the beginning*, they stand convicted of novelty; and, on that specific ground, they must, agreeably to the canon of Tertullian, be rejected as spurious.

If the claim of *immutability from the very age of the Apostles* could, indeed, be substantiated, every dissident from the Latin church would forthwith incur the just charge of manifest heresy. But here lies the grand difficulty of Romanism: a claim is preferred, which never has been, and which never can be, substantiated. The very circumstance of such a claim having been preferred, brings the whole matter to a question of *naked historic fact*; and, by the resolution of that question, the church of Rome is clearly found guilty of innovation.

II. In considering the difficulties attendant upon the Latin system of theology, I should be sorry to appear in the light of a captious and unfair objector. I wish to give the system every advantage; and, for that purpose, I would select as my text-book, not the unfavourable representation of a protestant controversialist, but the flattering delineation of a professed Roman advocate. Certainly, it is the most equitable to hear a Latin plead his own cause, and exhibit his own scheme of doctrine; nor is such a plan less advantageous than equitable. If, when the cause is pleaded by *himself* shall have been fairly heard, the difficulties of his system still appear insurmountable, he can have no reason to complain of having experienced controversial injustice. Meanwhile, if that system shall prove to be untenable, even when managed by all the dexterity of a practised advocate, what must be the condition of such a scheme, when viewed through a less flattering medium?

III. The composition which I have chosen as my text-book, is a very able work, recently published by

the present excellent Bishop of Aire, under the title of "*An Amicable Discussion respecting the Anglican church in particular, and the Reformation in general.*"*

In an epistle prefixed to it, this important work is dedicated to the clergy of all the Protestant communions; but it is specially addressed, in the form of letters, to an English traveller, who is described by the bishop as having stated to him certain doubts that had sprung up in his mind, with respect to the canonical legitimacy of his own church, and as having requested him to facilitate his honest research after theological truth. The desire of the traveller, whether real or fictitious, is granted; and the production of the bishop's work is the consequence.

IV. Of this work the main object is evidently the proselytism of the English laity. Such being the case, it was necessary, on the one hand, to attack the principles and the authority of the Anglican church: while, on the other hand, it was equally necessary to vindicate and to recommend the peculiar doctrines and practices of the church of Rome.

A work of this description I judged to be singularly adapted to the purpose which I had in view.

The respectable author of the *Amicable Discussion* is a prelate of the Latin church: he has undertaken to exhibit the peculiarities of his communion as they really exist, not as they are alleged to have

* *Discussion Amicale sur l'Eglise Anglicane et en général sur la Réformation, dédiée au Clergé de toutes les Communions Protestantes, et rédigée en forme de Lettres, par Monseigneur L'Evêque d'Aire. A Paris, chez Potey, Rue de Bac, No. 46.*—Let me be permitted to remark, that it is not merely the talent evinced in this publication which is likely to give it success; the personal character of the bishop himself must, of necessity, with all those who are fortunate enough to enjoy his acquaintance, add a tenfold weight to his writings. *His character*, says the English gentleman who transmitted to me his work from France, *is well known here; he is one of the very best of men.* I deem it a privilege to adopt the work of such a man as my text-book.

been disfigured by protestant misrepresentation; and in his high episcopal character, he may be viewed as one who speaks with a full measure both of knowledge and of authority. Under the hands of the exemplary Bishop of Aire, Romanism appears in its most captivating habiliments: whatever might offend the prejudices of an English layman is gracefully and decorously explained: doctrines and practices, which he had been taught to view with unutterable dislike, are shown, on the professed score of primitive antiquity, to be not only innocent, but even venerable and obligatory: and that alone catholic church, which the distempered imagination of panic-struck protestantism had pourtrayed as a misshapen and ferocious monster, proves, upon a candid examination, to be no other than a meek and harmless Hind.* If, then, Romanism, even as exhibited by such an advocate as the Bishop of Aire, *still* presents insuperable difficulties, the sober laic inquirer will at least pause, before he ventures to adopt a theological system thus unhappily circumstanced.

Nor did I deem the work useful to me solely on the ground of its professedly giving a true and ungarbled statement of the Latin faith. Since it attacks the church of England no less than it vindicates the church of Rome, I am thence enabled, by the aid of this valuable text-book, at once to point out the difficulties of Romanism, and to place before the eyes of the English laic the impregnable ground on which his own truly apostolic church has taken her lofty station.

- * — The rest amazed,
 Stood mutely still, and on the stranger gazed;
 Surveyed her part by part; and sought to find
 The ten-horn'd monster in the harmless Hind,
 Such as the wolf and panther had design'd.

DRYDEN'S *Hind and Panther*, Part i.

CHAPTER II.

The Difficulties of Romanism in regard to the Claim of Infallibility.

IF the infallibility of the Latin church could be clearly established, no person could rationally object to her theological decisions: for it were palpable madness in a fallible being to contend against acknowledged infallibility.

Hence I have ever thought, that *the establishment of infallibility* is the very nucleus of the Roman controversy; and hence I have always been specially desirous to hear the arguments which could be adduced in its favour.

Having never yet met with any thing satisfactory on the subject, I felt gratified at perceiving it discussed by such a man as the eminently learned Bishop of Aire; and I entered, with no ordinary interest, upon the perusal of his vindication.*

I. The prerogative of infallibility, or (what amounts to the same thing) the prerogative of entire freedom from all doctrinal error, is, I believe, unanimously claimed by the Latins on behalf of their own particular church. For they claim the privilege on behalf of the church catholic; and they *exclusively* identify the church catholic with the Latin or Roman church of the great western Patriarchate.

That the privilege, then, of infallibility resides in the catholic church, is strenuously maintained; but, as to the precise quarter where it is to be found,

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. iii.

there is not the same unanimity. Let it be sought, however, where it may, I greatly fear that its discovery will prove to be a hopeless impossibility.

1. The Jesuits and those high Romanists who bear the appellation of *Transalpines*, unless my information be wholly incorrect, contend for *the personal infallibility of the pope, when on any point of faith he undertakes to issue a solemn decision.**

If this theory be adopted, I perceive not how we can reconcile the authoritative declaration of Gregory the Great, respecting an article of no small doctrinal importance, with the completely opposite declarations of the popes, his successors.

Whoever claims the universal episcopate, said Gregory about the latter end of the sixth century, is the forerunner of Antichrist.†

Such is the decision of Gregory: yet this identical universal episcopate, as we all know, has been subsequently claimed by numerous pontiffs who have sat in what they deem the chair of St. Peter.‡

Hence it plainly follows, that, if the decision of Gregory be received as an infallible truth, his successors in the pontificate are the forerunners of Antichrist; while on the other hand, if his successors in the pontificate be *not* the forerunners of Antichrist, the decision of Gregory must be viewed as erroneous.

2. A protestant, however, may well spare himself the trouble of formally confuting the theory, by which the pope is decorated with the attribute of personal infallibility: for the low Romanists, who are distinguished by the name of *Cisalpines*, not only deny this infallibility of the pope, but even hold

* Butler's Book of the Rom. Cath. Church, p. 121-124.

† Ego fidenter dico, quod quisquis se Universalem Sacerdotem vocat, vel vocari desiderat, in elatione sua, Antichristum præcurrit.—Gregor. Magn. Epist. lib. vi. epist. 30.

‡ Quod solus Romanus Pontifex jure dicatur Universalis.—Gregor. sept. dictat. Epist. lib. ii. epist. 55. Labb. Concil. Sacrosanct. vol. x. p. 110.

that he may be deposed by the church or by a general council for heresy or schism.* Under such circumstances, if the prerogative of infallibility belong to the church, we must seek its residence elsewhere than in the person of the pope.

In what favoured region, then, shall we find this exalted privilege? The moderate Romanists, who claim infallibility for the catholic church collectively, suppose it to be lodged, as a sacred deposit, with *each general council viewed as the legitimate organ and representative of the catholic church.*

This hypothesis, in the abstract, is not devoid of plausibility; but, if we resort to facts, it will turn out to be not more tenable than the last. From faithful history we learn, that general councils, upon points both of doctrine and of practice, have decided in plain and avowed opposition to each other.

The Council of Constantinople, for instance, convoked in the year 754, unanimously decreed the removal of images and the abolition of image-worship; but the second Council of Nice, convoked in the year 787, decreed the re-establishment of image-worship, and anathematized all those who had concurred in its abolition.

I have simply stated a mere historical fact; but the result from it is abundantly manifest. Two discordant councils cannot *both* be in the right; and, if a single council be pronounced by the counter-decision of another council to have erred, the phantom of infallibility forthwith vanishes.†

* Butler's Book of the Rom. Cath. Church, p. 121-124.

† The variations of the Church, relative to the single point of image-worship, are so extraordinary, that they well deserve the attention of those who contend for her infallibility.

I. The ancient Council of Elvira, which sat during the reign of Constantine, and therefore, in the early part of the fourth century, *strictly enjoined*, that neither paintings nor images, representing the person whom we adore, should be introduced into churches.

For this striking and undoubted *fact* the Bishop of Aire would

3. To rid themselves of this difficulty, the theologians of the Latin church contend, that the decisions of no council are to be deemed infallibly true, unless they shall have received the approbation of the holy

account, on the principle, that the Elviran Fathers dreaded lest the new converts from paganism should unfortunately mistake Christian image-worship for pagan idolatry. *Discus. Amic. vol. ii. p. 350.* Let his solution avail, as far as it may avail: the FACT he fully acknowledges.

II. In the early ages, then, of Christianity, not only was the worship of images and pictures *unknown*, but their very introduction into churches was expressly *disallowed*.

Matters, however, did not long continue in this state. Images and pictures *in direct opposition* to the Council of Elvira, having at length been unadvisedly admitted on the plea that they were a sort of books for the unlearned, the idolatrous worship of them soon followed. About the end of the sixth century, a transaction of this nature took place at Marseilles; and, in consequence of it, Serenus the bishop wisely removed and destroyed the images. Hereupon, Pope Gregory the Great praised him for the stand which he had made against idolatry; but, under the fond pretext of their utility to the unlearned, blamed him for destroying the images. Wretchedly injudicious as was the latter part of this decision, Gregory, at least, speaks *fully* and *expressly* against *ANY* adoration either of pictures or of images. *Omne manufactum adorari NON LICET:—Adorari imagines, omnibus modis, VETA.—* Gregor. Magn. Epist. lib. xi. epist. 13. aliter 9.

III. Thus stood the question at the close of the sixth century; but, as might easily have been anticipated from the idolatry of the Massilians, the introduction of images soon led to their adoration. This gross abuse was strenuously opposed by the Emperor Leo the Isaurian; but, as it still continued to increase, his son Constantine assembled a council at Constantinople in the year 754, which formally *condemned* and *forbade* it.

IV. The Council of Constantinople, though it *agreed* in its condemnation of image-worship both with the decision of Pope Gregory the Great and with the yet more ancient decision of the Council of Elvira, was yet, on that very account, *disowned* as a legitimate council by the innovating successors of Gregory; and the cause of idolatry rapidly acquired such a degree of strength, that the second Council of Nice, which sat in the year 787, *reversed* the decree of the Council of Constantinople, pronounced it to be an illegitimate council, and *ordained* the adoration of images in language which strikingly contrasts with the express prohibition of Pope Gregory. *I confess, and agree, and receive, and salute, and adore, the unpolluted image of our Lord Jesus Christ our true God, and the holy image of the holy mother of God, who bore him*

see. Now, the Council of Constantinople *did not* receive the approbation of the holy see, while the second Council of Nice *did* receive it. Therefore, the Council of Constantinople being a spurious coun-

without conception of seed.—Concil. Nicen. secund. act. i. Labb. Concil. Sacrosanct. vol. vii. p. 60.

V. Having thus wholly departed from her former self, the Church, speaking through the mouth of a general council, had now *decreed* the orthodoxy and legality of image-worship: but this decree was not long suffered to remain undisputed either in the West or in the East.

1. In the year 794, Charlemagne assembled at Frankfort a council of three hundred bishops, who *reversed* the decision of the second Nicene Council, and who with one voice *condemned* the worship of images.

2. Such was the solemn judgment of the West; and that of the East speedily followed it. For, in the year 814, the Emperor Leo, imitating the conduct of Charlemagne, assembled another council at Constantinople, which, like that of Frankfort, *rescinded* and *abolished* the decrees of the second Nicene Council relative to the worship of images.

VI. Thus, as both the East and the West had concurred in *establishing* image-worship, through the medium of the second Council of Nice; so did both the West and the East concur in *condemning* image-worship, through the medium of the Councils of Frankfort and Constantinople.

But we have not yet reached the end of this strange eventful history of multiplied variations: we must prepare ourselves for yet additional changes of opinion on the part of a professedly unchangeable and infallible church.

In the year 842, the Empress Theodora, during the minority of her son, convened yet another council at Constantinople: and this assembly, differing entirely from its immediate predecessor, *reinstated* the decrees of the second Nicene Council, and thus *re-established* image-worship.

VII. Meanwhile, the Church of the Western Patriarchate continued to maintain, that the second Nicene Council had *erred* in its decision: for, in the year 824, Louis the Meek assembled a Council at Paris, which *confirmed* the decrees of the Council of Frankfort, and which strictly *prohibited* the payment of any, even the smallest religious worship to images.

VIII. The church, however, of the Eastern Patriarchate, subsequent to the year 842, persevered in declaring, that the decision of the second Nicene Council was an *orthodox* decision, and that images *ought* to be devoutly worshipped by all good Christians. To *establish* this point, therefore, an additional council was held at Constantinople in the year 879; and the Fathers of

cil, and as such being justly denied by its Nicene successor to be the seventh œcumenical council, its discrepance with the second Council of Nice, which was undoubtedly a legitimate council, affords no satisfactory proof that the catholic church is fallible.*

The soundness of this argument plainly depends upon *the legitimate existence of the alleged prerogative of the pope*. Before its soundness, therefore, can be admitted, the Latin theologians must demonstrate that, *by unquestionable divine right, while the approbation of any other see is wholly superfluous, the approbation of the see of Rome is necessary to constitute the validity of a general council*. Until this position can be established, it is mere trifling to deny the legitimacy of a discordant council, simply because it has not received the sanction of an Italian prelate. Let it be proved, that the bishop of Rome possesses by divine right the power of a *veto*; and the argument now before us will be perfectly conclusive. But, unless this vital point shall

that Synod decreed the undoubted obligation of image-worship, and confirmed and renewed the decrees of the second Council of Nice. Their decision gave such entire satisfaction to the Greeks, that they ascribed it to the peculiar interposition of heaven, and commemorated it by a yearly festival, which they appropriately called *the Feast of Orthodoxy*.

IX. Nor did the Latins long withhold their assent. The decisions of the Councils of Frankfort and Paris have been consigned to the owls and the bats; and the second Council of Nice, which enjoins the adoration of images, is now universally acknowledged to have set forth the true faith and practice of the gospel.

X. Such have been the multiplied variations of the church, in regard to the single point of image-worship; and yet, says the learned Bishop of Meaux, *The church, which professes to declare and to teach nothing save what she has received, NEVER VARIES; but heresy, on the contrary, which began by innovation, perpetually innovates, and never changes its nature*.—Hist. des Variat. pref. § v.

* In using this argument, the Latin theologians are clearly justified by the decision of Pope Gregory the Seventh, if indeed his authority be sufficient to decide the question. Quod nulla Synodus absque præcepto ejus (scil. Papæ) debet generalis vocari. Gregor. sept. dict. Epist. lib. ii. epist. 55. Labb. Concil. Sacros. vol. x. p. 110.

be previously established, the argument which is confessedly built upon it must, without doubt, be altogether insecure and inconclusive.*

I have no need, however, to press the matter; the fallibility of the church may be independently demonstrated, from the fact, that *the church of one age has contradicted the church of another age.*

In the year 1215, the fourth Council of Lateran decreed the truth of that doctrine of a *physical* change in the eucharistic bread and wine, which was then first distinguished by the technical name of *transubstantiation*.† Now this council received the full approbation of the holy see, at that time occupied by Pope Innocent the Third. Through it, therefore, as through her strictly canonical organ, the catholic church, according to the theory of the Latins, must be viewed as having spoken with the voice of undoubted infallibility.

Such being the case, since the catholic church of the thirteenth century has pronounced the doctrine of a *physical* change in the consecrated elements to be a true doctrine, if the catholic church be *really* infallible, she must invariably have taught and maintained that identical doctrine *from the very beginning.*

But we have positive historical evidence, that, during at least the five first centuries, the catholic church, so far from *teaching* the doctrine of a *physical* change, positively and explicitly, and even controversially, *denied* the occurrence of any *physical* change in the elements by virtue of the prayer of consecration.

Therefore, since the catholic church during one

* In order to establish the pope's divine right to a *veto*, it will be necessary to establish his divine right to *an universal controlling supremacy*. But that this cannot be done, is fully demonstrated below.—See book ii. chap. 3.

† Concil. Later. iv. can. 1. Labb. Concil. vol. xi. par. 1. p. 143.

period has *denied* the doctrine of a *physical* change, while during another period she has *enforced* and *inculcated* it; the catholic church, having successively maintained *two directly opposite dogmas*, is thence incontrovertibly demonstrated to be not infallible.

That the catholic church of the early ages *denied* the doctrine of a *physical* change, and that she acknowledged no change in the consecrated elements, save a *moral* change only; a change, for instance, avowedly declared to be similar to that which takes place in a man, when, by virtue of the prayer of consecration, he ceases to be a laic and becomes a priest; that such was the decision of the church of the early ages, may be easily shown, by direct evidence, beyond the possibility of contradiction.* The fact is invincibly established by the united testimony of Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodoret of Cyrus, Pope Gelasius, Facundus, Ephrem of Antioch, and others who might easily be enumerated.† For not only is any *physical* change in the elements expressly denied, while the occurrence of nothing save a *moral* change is allowed; but some of these writers, among whom pope Gelasius in the West, and Theodoret and Ephrem in the East, may be specially mentioned, even ARGUE copiously and professedly AGAINST the identical doctrine, which in a subsequent age, the church, speaking through the fourth Council of La-

* See below, book i. Chap. 4—8.

† Clem. Alex. *Pædag.* lib. i. c. 6. p. 104, 105. lib. ii. c. 2. p. 156, 158. Tertul. *adv. Marcion.* lib. i. § 9. p. 155. lib. iii. § 12, 13. p. 209. Tertul. *de Anim.* p. 653. Cyprian. *Epist. Cœcil.* lxiii. p. 153, 154. August. *cont. Adamant.* c. xii. oper. vol. vi. p. 69. *Enarr. in Psalm.* iii. xcvi. oper. vol. viii. p. 7, 397. Athanas. in *illud evan. Quicumque dixerit verbum contra filium hominis.* Oper. vol. i. p. 771, 772. Gregor. Nyssen. *de Baptism.* oper. vol. iii. p. 369. Theodor. *Dial.* i. ii. oper. vol. iv. p. 17, 18, 84, 85. Gelas. *de duab. Christ. natur.* in *Biblioth. Patr.* vol. iv. p. 422. Facund. *Defens. Concil. Chalced.* lib. ix. c. 5. oper. p. 144. Ephrem. *Antioch. cont. Eutyech.* apud Phot. *Cod.* 229.

teran, pronounced to be an undoubted scriptural verity. Nor can it be said, that these authors spoke only in their *individual* capacities, and that the catholic church must not be made answerable for *their* errors. Such a solution of the difficulty is, in every point of view, inadmissible. In the first place, the early church never condemned the doctrine which they taught and maintained; but this she assuredly would have done, had she herself received and held the directly opposite doctrine from the very beginning. In the second place, nothing can be more evident, from the whole turn of their language, than that they are not hazarding any novel speculations of their own, but that they are propounding the well known and familiar doctrine of the period during which they flourished. In the third place, this matter is put out of all doubt, both by the high rank of certain of the writers, and by the avowed character controversially assumed and sustained by others of them. When pope Gelasius undertook to write against the then nascent doctrine of a *physical* change, we may be morally sure that his pen set forth the universally-received sense of the entire catholic church; and, when his contempory, Theodoret, in the East harmoniously opposed the same doctrine of a *physical* change, under the specific title of *the orthodox defender of the genuine faith*, we may again be morally certain, that he could never have made his *Orthodoxus* argue against transubstantiation, while transubstantiation is defended by the heretic *Eranistes*, had he not well known that the catholic church would readily acknowledge *Orthodoxus* as her accredited champion.

Thus it is manifest, that at two different periods the catholic church has taught two *opposite* and *irreconcilable* doctrines. Whence it follows, that the catholic church cannot be infallible.*

* I need scarcely observe, that every innovation, which contradicts the doctrine and practice of the early church, furnishes an

4. The alleged infallibility of the church, however, is not only disproved by her own internal variations; it is yet additionally disproved by the fact, that *councils, received as ecumenical, and thence deemed incapable of error, have actually promulgated decrees, which stand directly opposed to the unequivocal declarations of Holy Scripture.*

(1.) We are repeatedly assured by the voice of inspiration, that an oath is most imperiously binding upon the conscience, that those who love false oaths are hated by the Lord, that whatever goes forth from a person's lips under the obligation of an oath must be kept and performed, and that an oath must be religiously observed, even though the observation of it may be disadvantageous to the interest of the juror.*

Yet, in defiance of language thus clear and explicit, the third Council of Lateran, which is acknowledged as the eleventh ecumenical council, has ventured to decree, that all oaths which are adverse to the utility of the church must in no wise be performed; but, on the contrary, with whatever solemnity and apparent good faith they may have been taken, they must be unscrupulously violated, inasmuch as they are to be deemed perjuries rather than oaths.†

Thus, while God, who has been invoked as a witness, and while Holy Scripture, which solemnly declares the inviolable sacredness of an oath, even

additional proof, that the church, under whatever aspect it be viewed, is mutable and fallible. In the sequel we shall find so many of these contradictory innovations fully developed, that the Roman church, which in the nomenclature of the Latins is always identified with the catholic church, instead of *never* varying from primitive antiquity, may be chiefly characterized by its singular love of innovation.

* Numb. xxx. 2. Levit. xix. 12. Deut. xxiii. 23. Zechar. viii. 17. Psalm xv. 4. Rev. xxi. 8.

† Non enim dicenda sunt juramenta, sed potius perjuria, quæ contra utilitatem ecclesiasticam et sanctorum patrum veniunt instituta.—Concil. Lateran. tert. can. xvi. Labb. Concil. Sacrosanct. vol. x. p. 1517.

though it be to a person's own damage, are alike disregarded when placed in competition with the power and aggrandisement of ambitious ecclesiastics: the obligation or non-obligation of an oath is made, by the third Council of Lateran, to depend solely upon its utility or non-utility to the interests of the church, as those interests shall be understood and explained by the governors of the church for the time being.*

* The exemplification of this extraordinary principle, in the case of John Huss, is well known.

Huss had received a safe-conduct from the Emperor Sigismond. But the oath of that prince was adjudged, by the existing governors of the church, to be *contra utilitatem ecclesiasticam*. Whence, as being no oath, but rather an act of perjury, he was bound in duty to break it.

Respecting the present transaction, much has been warmly said and written; but, *if the infallibility of the church be admitted*, I see not how we can justly blame either Sigismond or the Council of Constance.

By the third Council of Lateran, *the obligation of destroying heretics* had been imposed upon the faithful; and, by the same ecumenical Council, the doctrine, that *all oaths, which are against ecclesiastical utility, become ipso facto, null and void*, had been fully established.—Concil. Lateran. tert. can. xxvii. xvi. Labb. Concil. Sacros. vol. x. p. 1522, 1517.

Such being the case, no person who holds the infallibility of the church, can consistently censure either Sigismond or the Council of Constance. For, had they acted otherwise in the matter of Huss, they would, by impugning the decisions of the third Council of Lateran, have virtually denied the infallibility of the church.

I repeat it, therefore, that all who maintain the infallibility of the church, stand pledged to vindicate the conduct of Sigismond and the Council of Constance.

In truth, *they themselves* stand pledged to act in the same manner, should they ever be placed in the same circumstances; nor is it possible for them to deny this obligation without *also* denying the infallibility of the church. Let the Romanist tie himself by ever so solemn an oath, still, if the governors of his church pronounce that oath to be *contra utilitatem ecclesiasticam*, he is religiously bound by the sixteenth canon of the third Council of Lateran forthwith to violate it. Should he, like an honest man, indignantly disclaim any such obligation, he then most assuredly contradicts the decision of the eleventh ecumenical council,

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(2.) So again, we are distinctly taught by an inspired apostle, that *marriage is honourable in ALL*, whether the married individuals be clerks or laics: and, in strict accordance with this decision, the marriage of the clergy, whatever may be their special order, is expressly mentioned by the same apostle with full and entire approbation.*

Yet the second Council of Lateran, which is acknowledged as the tenth ecumenical council, strictly prohibits the marriage of ecclesiastics, down to the rank of the subdiaconate inclusive; and, by way of making the prohibition more effectual, it forbids the laity to hear mass performed by any priest who shall have dared to violate this enactment.†

In excuse for such a determined opposition to God's own word, it is commonly said by the modern Romanists, that the enforced celibacy of the priesthood is only a point of discipline, that it stands upon the same footing as the observance of any mere rite or ceremony, and that it may be enjoined or remitted at the good pleasure of the church.‡

So may the Romanists apologise for the infatuated rashness of the council; but such an apology, even to say nothing of its glaring insufficiency, upon *their own* shewing, is *itself* founded upon a gross misstatement. The second Council of Lateran prohibits the marriage of ecclesiastics, not on the simple ground of *mutable and temporary expediency*, but on the lofty ground of *immutable, and eternal, and inhe-*

and thus by a necessary consequence denies the church to be infallible.

The third Council of Lateran, in short, has reduced every Romanist to the following most unsatisfactory dilemma:—

He must either maintain, that no oath, pronounced to be *against ecclesiastical utility*, is binding; or he must at once deny the infallibility of the church.

* Heb. xiii. 4. 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4, 8, 11, 12.

† Concil. Lateran. secund. can. vi. vii. Labb. Concil. Sacrosanct. vol. x. p. 1003, 1004.

‡ Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 403, note.

rent unholiness. Ecclesiastics are forbidden to marry, *not because such prohibition, under certain circumstances of the church, may be convenient as a point of discipline; but because, as the council assures us, it is AN UNWORTHY DEED, that those persons who ought to be the holy vessels of the Lord, should debase themselves so far as to become the vile slaves of CHAMBERING and UNCLEANNESS.**

Thus speaks and thus argues the second Council of Lateran with respect to the marriage of ecclesiastics. The case, therefore, between Scripture and the council, stands in manner following:

Scripture both *allows* and *recommends* the marriage of the clergy; but the council *disallows* and *prohibits* it.

Scripture declares, that *marriage is HONOURABLE in ALL men, whether they be clerks or laics*; but the council pronounces, that *the marriage of the clergy is AN UNWORTHY DEED, being in truth no better than a state of base thralldom to CHAMBERING and UNCLEANNESS†.*

* Cum enim ipsi templum Dei, vasa Domini, sacrarium Spiritus Sancti, debeant et esse et dici: INDIGNUM est eos CUBILIBUS et IMMUNDITIIS deservire.—Concil. Lateran. secund. can. vi. Labb. Concil. Sacrosanct. vol. x. p. 1003.

† Pope Gregory the Seventh had already caused the marriage of the clergy to be prohibited in the thirteenth canon of the first Roman Council, which was convened in the year 1074.—See Labb. Concil. Sacrosanct. vol. x. p. 326–328.

The effect produced by this inhibition is too remarkable to be pretermitted in silence.

When it was published by the papal legates in Germany, the clergy, so far from peaceably submitting, **APPEALED TO SCRIPTURE, and CHARGED GREGORY AND HIS COUNCIL WITH CONTRADICTING ST. PAUL.**

The same opposition, on the same ground, was made also at Milan; and the only individual who there yielded obedience was Luitprand.

How the charge of **CONTRADICTION TO ST. PAUL** can be removed, I do not distinctly perceive.—See Lamb. Schasnaburg. Hist. German. A. D. 1074. p. 201. Sigebert. Gembloc. Chron. A. D. 1074. Matt. Paris in Gulielm. I. Aventin. Annał. Boiord. lib.

Hence it is evident, that in each of these two cases, the decisions of ecumenical councils have directly contradicted the decisions of Scripture; and hence also it is evident, that, by the indisputable fact of this direct contradictoriness, we are irresistibly driven to the following very unpleasant alternative.

If the church, speaking through an ecumenical council, be infallible, then the decisions of Holy Scripture are erroneous; and, conversely, if the decisions of Holy Scripture be essential truth, then the church, speaking through an ecumenical council, is undoubtedly fallible.

From this alternative there is no possibility of evasion. Holy Scripture says one thing, and the second and third Councils of Lateran say another thing; therefore Holy Scripture cannot stand with the second and third Councils of Lateran.

II. I have rested my entire argument upon *naked facts*; and these *facts* are, that *the church both in her doctrine and in her practice has directly contradicted herself*, and likewise that *the church both in her doctrine and in her practice has directly contradicted the inspired decisions of Holy Scripture*. Such being the case, it is utterly impossible that the church should be infallible. The fond notion of her perfect freedom from all error is confuted by the invincible evidence of *naked facts*; and, against *naked facts*, no mere abstract reasoning, however plausible and ingenious, can be allowed to stand good.

Here, then, I might fairly close the present discussion; yet, as I would not appear deficient in respect to the exemplary prelate of Aire, I shall notice, though I deem it a work of supererogation, the *arguments* which he has advanced.

1. The bishop contends, that, from the very reason of the thing, Christ *must* have left us some infallible

v. p. 564, cited in Stillingfleet's Discourse on the Church of Rome, chap. v. p. 369.

mode of determining the truth, and thereby of preserving and maintaining ecclesiastical unity. Whence he concludes, that Christ actually *has* left us this requisite infallible mode of determination.

In matters which respect the Deity, I am not very fond of the adventurous *à priori* reasoning adopted by the bishop. It is dangerous to argue that God *has* done what we conceive he *must* have done. Had I discovered the actual existence of a living infallible umpire in points of faith and practice, I should have felt assured that such a dispensation of the truth was most wise and most fitting; but I should hesitate to maintain with the bishop, that this dispensation must needs *actually* exist, because to myself it abstractedly *appeared* most fitting and most wise.

This latter method of reasoning is, I think, too insecure to be adopted by any prudent theologian; and of its danger we have recently had a very striking example. The respectable bishop of Aire, simply from his own private view of the divine attributes, has ventured to maintain, that infallibility *must* reside in the catholic church. Yet, if we can submit to introduce into dogmatical theology the rational Newtonian principle of *experiment*, we shall find the direct opposite of the bishop's conclusion established by *naked facts*.

2. The bishop further argues in favour of the infallibility of the church, from the interpretation which he himself puts upon various promises and expressions of our blessed Saviour.

On the one side we have *facts*; on the other side we have *the bishop's proposed interpretation of our Saviour's language*. That our Lord made certain promises and employed certain expressions, no person will deny; but, when the bishop's interpretation of his language is found to be contradicted by *facts*, I see not what conclusion we can rationally draw, save that the interpretation is erroneous. Christ *himself* cannot err; but it is very possible that the par-

tisan of a particular set of opinions may *misapprehend* his meaning.

The bishop, be it observed, does not argue from our Lord's promises and expressions *themselves*, but from his own *interpretation* of those promises and expressions. Now, we protestants give an entirely different exposition of them; and, by *our* exposition, (into which it is assuredly quite irrelevant to enter,) no such result, as the infallibility of the church and the supremacy of the see of Rome, is produced.

Doubtless, the *bishop* may object to *our* interpretation, just as *we* object to *his*. But, whether we be right or wrong in *our* view of Christ's language, we at least have *this* advantage over the bishop. *His* interpretation is *confuted* by facts; *our* interpretation *corresponds* with them.

3. The bishop lastly argues, that the catholic church, which he would confine within the pale of the western Latin church, cannot err in her doctrines, because they have regularly descended to her, step by step, from the apostles themselves, whose inspired infallibility is acknowledged by all.

This argument is an extension of the well-known argument from *prescription*, employed so successfully by Irenæus and Tertullian in the second century.

Doctrines, they contend, received through the medium of only two or three links from the apostles themselves, and with one consent declared by all the various churches then in existence to have been thus received, cannot be false. Thus, for instance, Irenæus, himself the pupil of Polycarp the disciple of St. John, bears witness to *the fact*, that, in his time, all the churches in the world held the doctrine of our Lord's divinity; each professing to have received it, through the medium of one or two or three links, from the apostles; and his testimony is corroborated by Hege-sippus, who, about the middle of the second century,

travelled from Asia to Rome, and found the same system of doctrine uniformly established in every church. Facts of this description form the basis of the reasoning adopted by Irenæus and Tertullian; and the conclusion which they deduce from it is, *the moral impossibility of the catholic system of theology being erroneous.**

Such is the argument, as managed by those two ancient fathers; but, as employed by the bishop of Aire, it is a mere fallacy, the detection of which is not very difficult.

What was a very good argument in the second century, when the various allied branches of the catholic church universally symbolized in doctrine, and when no church was separated from the apostles by more than one or two or three links, is but a very sorry argument in the nineteenth century, when we are separated from the apostles by some sixty links of a chain, which extends through a long period of darkness and violence and superstition. That various innovations *would* be introduced in the course of such a period, we might well, from the cumulative nature of tradition, reasonably anticipate; that various innovations *have* been introduced in the course of that period, we learn most incontrovertibly from documents yet extant. The argument from *prescription*, so far (we will say) as it respects the nature of God and of Christ, the matters specially set forth in the ancient symbols of the church, is just as strong now as it was in the days of Irenæus and Tertullian; because we still possess their writings; and, consequently, for all controversial purposes with heretics, *we* occupy the identical place which *they* occupied. But the argument from *prescription*, as employed in the nineteenth century for the purpose

* Iren. adv. hæz. lib. i. c. 2, 3. lib. iii. c. 1, 3, 4. Hegesip. Apud. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 21. Tertull. de præscript. adv. hæz. oper. p. 95-117.

of establishing those various unscriptural tenets which the bishop propounds *seriatim* as indispensable terms of communion with the church of Rome, is certainly inconclusive; because, by no mechanism, can the chain be extended from the present age to the age of the apostles. Faithful history will, for the most part, enable us to ascertain the very times of their introduction; and, if in any case we cannot specify the absolutely precise era (for the growth of error is frequently gradual), we can at least point out the period when no such tenets existed. Some of them, no doubt, are of considerable antiquity: but, let their antiquity be what it may, if they originated *subsequently* to the apostolic age, the connecting chain is effectually broken; and they stand forth as convicted novelties. *Whatever is first, is true; whatever is more recent, is spurious.* The argument from *prescription*, in the hands of Irenæus and Tertullian, invincibly establishes the catholic doctrines of Christ's godhead and the Trinity; because it clearly connects them with the inspired apostolic college. But the argument from *prescription*, in the hands of the bishop of Aire, fails of establishing the various tenets for which he so eagerly contends; because it wholly fails of connecting them with the infallible apostolic college, and thence of necessity leaves them branded with the stigma of detected innovation.

III. How then, it may be asked, in these latter days of the world, are we to settle disputed points of doctrine and practice? How are we to avoid those divisions, which the bishop triumphantly exhibits as the opprobrium of the reformation?

An answer, not altogether unsatisfactory, may, I think, be given to this important question, without calling in the aid either of a pope or of a council.

1. As the Bible is confessedly the revealed will of God, and as no one pretends that we possess any other written, and therefore any other certain, revelation, we must evidently begin with rejecting every

doctrine and every practice built upon such doctrine, which have clearly no foundation in Holy Scripture.

This process will at once sweep away a large heap of mere unauthorized innovations, which lamentably encumber the church of Rome, and which assuredly will never be adopted by those who take their divinity from the Bible alone.

2. When sundry innovations have been thus removed, as supported by no scriptural authority, other certain tenets will still remain, which, unlike the last, profess to be built upon the sure foundation of God's own inspired word.

Here our business is obviously reduced to a *point of interpretation*; and, as very different expositions may be given of the same passage, the question arises, *who is to determine which exposition is the truth?*

(1.) The bishop of Aire will doubtless say; *Consult the catholic church, the sole judge and depository of the true faith.*

This may be very good advice in the abstract; but the difficulty is to explain how such advice must be followed. Had the church never varied, we might have had some reasonable expectation of success; but, unhappily, as it is well remarked by the deeply learned Chillingworth, *there have been popes against popes, councils against councils; councils confirmed by popes against councils confirmed by popes; the church of some ages against the church of other ages.** Under such circumstances, therefore, the bishop must not only advise us to consult the catholic church; but he must also specify, giving reasons for his specification, the exact time when the catholic church is to be consulted.

(2.) Others, perhaps, will exhort us to call in the right of private judgment, which has often been described more eloquently than wisely, as a main principle of protestantism, and which the bishop of

* Chillingworth's Relig. of Protest. chap. iii. p. 147.

Aire not unjustly reprobates as leading to nothing but confusion.

Of this principle, as exhibited by the bishop, and not unfrequently as exhibited also by unwary protestants, I entertain not a much higher opinion than the bishop himself does. The exercise of *insulated* private judgment, which in effect is the abuse of *legitimate* private judgment, must clearly convert the church catholic into a perfect Babel; and, although I deny the right of *such* private judgment to be a principle either of sound protestantism in general, or of the Anglican church in particular, yet I regret to say, that it has much too often been exercised, to the scandal of all sober men, and to the unspeakable detriment of genuine religion.

Having thus fairly stated my own sentiments, I shall explain what I conceive to be the difference between *legitimate private judgment* and *illegitimate private judgment*.

To a certain extent the bishop of Aire will allow, that private judgment *must* be exercised. Thus, I cannot read his lordship's very able work and come to a conclusion upon it, without *so far* exercising private judgment; and the very tenor of the whole composition implies, that private judgment in the choice of their religion will be exercised by those English travellers, for whose especial benefit it seems to have been written. Thus, likewise, we shall introduce an universal scepticism, if we deny the right of forming a private judgment upon perfectly unambiguous propositions. No authoritative explanation can throw any additional light upon the several prohibitions of murder and theft and adultery, which occur in Holy Scripture. We read those prohibitions in the sacred volume; we involuntarily exercise our private judgment upon their import; and, by its mere simple exercise alone, we are *all* brought, without any need of inquiring the sense of the church, to one and the same interpretation. In

these matters, and in various others which might easily be specified, I hold private judgment to be strictly legitimate; and I feel persuaded that the bishop of Aire will not disagree with me.

But, although there is such a thing as *legitimate private judgment* in matters of religion, there doubtless is such a thing also as *illegitimate private judgment*. Now this last modification I would define to be *private judgment, in the interpretation of litigated passages of Scripture, exercised after a perfectly independent or insulated manner*.

Against *this* exercise of private judgment, which is a lamentable abuse of the reformation, all prudent and judicious men must strenuously protest. It assuredly can only be the fruitful parent of discord and error. For if, without using those means of ascertaining the truth which God has put into our hands, this man and that man, after a simple inspection of a litigated text, shall *dogmatically* and *independently* pronounce that such or such an interpretation *must* set forth its true meaning; we shall doubtless have small prospect of ever arriving at a reasonable certainty in regard to the mind of Scripture. The absurdity of such a proceeding is self-evident; for, if each individual, disdaining all *extrinsic* aid, is to be his own *independent* expositor, we may well nigh have as many expositions of litigated texts, as there exist rash and ignorant and self-opinionated individuals; and, accordingly, we must not dissemble, that, from the *illegitimate* exercise of *insulated* private judgment, sects, rivalling each other in presumptuous unscriptural folly, have sprung up like mushrooms. Thus acted not the wise reformers of the church of England. I greatly mistake if, in any one instance, they can be shown to have exercised that *insulated* private judgment which I agree with the bishop in heartily reprobating. In fact, they possessed far too much theological learning, and far too much

sound intellect, to fall into the palpable error now before us.

(3.) Omitting then *the mere dogmatism of the Latin church* on the one hand, and *the wanton exercise of illegitimate private judgment* on the other hand, the practice of those venerable and profound theologians, who presided over the reformation of the Anglican church, will teach us, that the most rational mode of determining differences is *a recurrence to first principles, or an appeal to that primitive church which was nearest to the times of the apostles.*

Certainly the inspired apostles of the Lord must have fully known the genuine doctrines of christianity. What was the true sense of the written word, on all important points, they would assuredly explain to their immediate disciples. Their conversations and their compositions could not disagree. Hence their immediate disciples, thus carefully taught and catechized, would teach and maintain the same doctrinal system that the apostles taught and maintained. In process of time, error and corruption might doubtless creep into the church; but the introduction of error is not instantaneous; experience shows its progress to be gradual. On these perfectly intelligible grounds, some considerable period must have elapsed, before any material inroad was made into the apostolic doctrine within the pale of the catholic church herself; and a yet longer period must have been evolved, before any considerable doctrinal error became the prevailing opinion. Polycarp of Smyrna was a hearer of the apostles, and especially of St. John, who seems, through God's providence, to have been preserved alive after all his brethren, for the purpose of authoritatively determining the truth against the growing heresies of the times. Irenæus of Lyons was the scholar of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John; and from him he professed, in common with all the

churches of proconsular Asia, to have received his theology. Justin Martyr calls himself *a disciple of the apostles*; by which, according to the phraseology of the day, we must understand him to have been a pupil of those apostolical men who were placed in the several churches by the apostles themselves; and, accordingly, since he flourished only about forty years after the death of St. John, he must, by the very necessity of chronology, have conversed with the scholars of the apostles. Clement of Alexandria professed to be the pupil of Pantenus, who by some of the ancients is said to have been a disciple of the apostles, and who doubtless had heard the fathers denominated *apostolical*. Contemporary with Clement was Tertullian; and to these succeeded Origen and Cyprian; one generation of early teachers still following another.*

The several writers here enumerated, though but few out of many, form a chain which reaches up to St. John and the apostles. Hence, if we can be morally certain of any thing, we may be sure, that, in their exposition of Scripture, so far as the great leading doctrines of christianity are concerned, they would proceed, either on direct apostolic authority, or at least according to the then universally known

* Clement of Alexandria, who flourished toward the latter end of the second century, expressly tells us, that some of the disciples of Peter and James, and John and Paul, had lived even down to this time, regularly conveying to that generation, like sons from their fathers, the true apostolic doctrine.—Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 274, 275. Colon. 1688.—In a similar manner Justin Martyr declares, that he and the men of his own ecclesiastical generation had been instructed, in the joint worship of the Father and the Son and the prophetic Spirit, by the catechists of the generation which preceded him, and which itself must inevitably have conversed with St. John.—Justin. Apol. i. vulg. ii. oper. p. 43. Sylburg. 1593.—Clement flourished about forty years later than Justin. Hence, on chronological principles, Clement, I imagine, must in his *youth* have conversed with the apostolical men whom he notices; just as his partial contemporary Irenæus describes himself to have conversed with Polycarp.—Iren. adv. hæc. lib. iii. c. 3. § 3.

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analogy of apostolic faith. Can we believe, for instance, if John and the apostles had diligently taught the bare humanity of Christ and the impersonal unity of the Godhead, that their immediate disciples, and the scholars of their immediate disciples, would agree in expounding a variety of texts after the precise manner in which they are expounded by the Trinitarian? Would not the very reverse have proved to be the case? Should we not have found all these litigated texts distinctly and unanimously interpreted by them, not after the mode adopted by the modern trinitarian, but after some such mode as that which is recommended by the modern anti-trinitarian?*

Here then, I apprehend, we have a rationally satisfactory method of determining those differences in regard to the import of Scripture, which must ever spring up from *the illegitimate use of insulated private judgment*.

Where, in her yet existing documents, the primitive church is explicit, we must, so far as I can judge, on the principles of right reason, submit ourselves to her decision; where she is silent or indefinite or ambiguous, we must, I fear, be content still mutually to differ in opinion.

* On this topic I venture to speak with positiveness and decision. From my own personal examination I can attest, that the passages in the New Testament, litigated by trinitarians and anti-trinitarians, are constantly understood and interpreted by the fathers of the three first centuries in the same manner as they are now understood and interpreted by modern trinitarians. The work, denominated *The New Testament in an improved version*, is the most perfect example of the *illegitimate exercise of insulated private judgment* with which I am acquainted. Totally opposing itself to the decisions of the catholic church nearest to the times of the apostles, it exhibits interpretations of the litigated texts, framed upon the mere independent dogmata of Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham, but altogether unknown to the ecclesiastics of the three first centuries. I adduce this production, to exemplify what I mean by *the illegitimate use of insulated private judgment*. If we ask a reason, *why* the litigated texts are thus expounded, no answer can be given, save the good pleasure of the editor.

It will readily be perceived, that the bishop's mode of settling differences varies from mine in the important article of *extension*.

He would carry the chain down to the present time: *I* deem it more prudent to stop in the primitive ages.

Perhaps it may be asked, where *I* would draw the line? To this captious, but fallacious, question, *I* judge it sufficient to give the following answer:—

Where a writer propounds a doctrine which rests not upon the firm basis of Scripture, *I* would reject it as a commandment of men, let the writer flourish when he may; and, where a later writer differs from an earlier writer in his exposition of a litigated doctrinal text, *I* should *generally* deem the authority of the earlier writer preferable, inasmuch as he stands nearer to the fountain-head of apostolic purity.

Such a method of checking the license of private judgment, and of attaining to the truth with as much moral certainty as God has been pleased to allow, seems, in the main, unobjectionable. To the ancient ecclesiastical writers *I* ascribe not the infallibility of inspiration; but, as evidences of the doctrine of the primitive church, and thence ultimately as evidences also of the doctrine of the inspired apostles and of our Lord himself, they may justly be deemed in valuable.

CHAPTER III.

The Difficulties of Romanism in regard to tradition and the doctrinal Instruction of the Church.

THE bishop of Aire's remarks on the authority of tradition and on the doctrinal instruction of the church, I have been led, by the necessary course of my argument, in a great measure to anticipate; my few additional observations upon them will not, therefore, extend to any very great length.*

No accurate investigator can read the bishop's remarks on these topics, without being struck with the singular fallacies which pervade them.

I. The Latin church, as we all know, has handed down to the present time various doctrines and various practices. *Some* of these are *received* by protestants; *others* of them are *rejected*. Now this eclectic process is censured by the bishop: and he requires us, as we value the praise of consistency, either to *receive* the whole mass or to *reject* the whole mass.†

His argument, when thrown into a regular form, will run, I apprehend, as follows.

The Latin church has handed down to the present time the several doctrines of the trinity, the Godhead of Christ, the incarnation, the atonement, transubstantiation, purgatory, and the invocation of the saints. But protestants receive the doctrines of the trinity, the Godhead of Christ, the incarnation, and the

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. iv. v.

† Discuss. Amic. vol. i. p. 196.

atonement: **THEREFORE** they are bound also to receive transubstantiation, purgatory, and the invocation of the saints.

Such is the bishop's argument; but I am unable to discover the link by which he binds his conclusion to his premises.

The first class of doctrines we certainly *receive*; because we find them in Scripture, both according to its natural interpretation, and as it was invariably understood by the primitive church nearest to the times of the apostles: the second class of doctrines we certainly *reject*; because we find them neither in Scripture nor in the creed of the earliest church. Under such circumstances, because we differ from the modern Latin church on *some* points, we discern no reason why we should differ from her on *all* points. It is to her praise that she has faithfully handed down the great essential doctrines of our common christianity: it is to her dispraise that, from a higher or lower comparative antiquity, she has also handed down an accumulated mass of wood and hay and stubble.* Because we receive the *former*, are we to be censured as inconsistent on the ground of our rejecting the *latter*? I see not the justice of the charge. It tacitly implies, that the two classes of doctrines rest upon the same authority. But here is the fallacy: they do **NOT** rest upon the same authority.

II. The bishop quarrels with the principle of our English church, that *Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that, whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.*†

With this principle the bishop quarrels; and he thinks that he can reduce us to an absurdity, not to say a contradiction. Our article, we are told, while

* 1 Corinth. iii. 12.

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† Art. vi.

it claims to make Scripture its special basis, flatly contradicts Scripture itself. For, in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the observance of verbal, *no less* than of written, tradition is enjoined by St. Paul.* But the article maintains, that written tradition, as contained in Holy Scripture, is *alone* to be received.

I am unable to discover the contradiction alleged by the bishop. He seems to forget that our article respects the Bible *as it stood in the sixteenth century*, not *as it stood when St. Paul addressed his second Epistle to the Thessalonians*. Now, at the time when that epistle was written, the canon of the New Testament was so far from being completed, that most probably *not one* of the four gospels, most certainly *not all* the four gospels, had been published. At the same period also, the Acts of the Apostles, the Revelation, the Epistles to the Corinthians, and Romans, and Colossians, and Ephesians, and Hebrews, and Timothy and Philemon, by St. Paul; the second Epistle by St. Peter, the Epistle by St. James, and the three Epistles by St. John, were not in existence. In short, when St. Paul charged the Thessalonians to *hold the traditions which they had been taught, whether by word or by his epistle*, the canon of the New Testament, even upon the most liberal allowance, could not have contained more than the following books: the Gospel of St. Matthew, the first Epistle of St. Peter, the Epistle to the Galatians, the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, the Epistle to Titus, and the Epistle of Jude. This being the case, it is no very chimerical supposition, that the matters, verbally delivered by St. Paul, were afterward, in the course of God's providence, committed to faithful writing. Whence it would follow, that the position contained in the sixth article of the Anglican church, though not strictly true when the apostle wrote his

* 2 Thess. ii. 15. iii. 6.

second letter to the Thessalonians, may yet in the sixteenth century have been an incontrovertible verity.

After all, I doubt not that the church of England will readily make a large concession to the bishop of Aire. Notwithstanding the very different states of the canon at the present day, and at the time when the second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written, let his lordship prove that the traditions of the modern Latin church are the identical verbal traditions of St. Paul; and the Anglican church, I feel assured, will forthwith receive them.

III. In the judgment of the bishop, tradition is of such vital importance, that the very canon of Scripture itself depends upon it. By renouncing, therefore, the tradition of the Latin church, we effectively invalidate the authority of the canon of Scripture.

From the frequency and confidence with which this objection is adduced, one might almost imagine, that our Latin brethren deemed us altogether ignorant of the very existence of the early ecclesiastical writers. For the settling of the canon, we resort, not to the naked dogmatical authority of the see of Rome, but to the sufficient evidence borne to that effect in the yet existing documents of the primitive church. Were the candlestick of the Roman angel removed to-morrow, the totally independent testimony, on which the English church receives the canon, would remain altogether unaffected.

CHAPTER IV.

The Difficulties of Romanism in respect to the Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

THE disagreement between the church of England and the church of Rome, in regard to the doctrine of the holy Eucharist, chiefly respects the supposed process denominated *transubstantiation*. On this point, the church of England teaches that the consecrated bread and wine symbolically represent the body and blood of our Saviour Christ; while the church of Rome contends, that they are actually so transmuted in their essential qualities, as to cease being any longer literal bread and wine, and as henceforth to become his strictly literal and proper, and substantial and material flesh and blood. Here, if I mistake not, is the main disagreement between the two churches. With respect to the doctrine of the real presence, they both hold it; but, as we might naturally anticipate, it severally assumes in those two communions its specific colour from the opinions with which it is severally connected. The church of England believes Christ to be really, though spiritually, present with all devout and faithful communicants; so that, although *his body and blood be verily and indeed, for every saving and beneficial purpose, taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper; yet the body of Christ is given and taken and eaten in the holy supper only after an heavenly and spiritual manner, the mean whereby it is so received and eaten being faith.** On the other hand,

* Church Catech. on the Euch. and Art. xxviii.

the church of Rome believes Christ to be not only really, but also corporeally and materially, present in the Eucharist; whence of necessity she maintains, that every recipient, good or bad, faithful or unfaithful, partakes of the proper and literal flesh and blood of the glorified Saviour.

In regard then to the real presence, the two churches differ only in their opinions respecting the *mode*; but, in regard to the change produced in the bread and wine by the words of consecration, their disagreement is *utterly irreconcilable*. A *moral* change the Anglican church allows to be produced; the bread and wine ceasing to be common bread and wine, and henceforth being sanctified and set apart to the most solemn office of our religion; so that to reserve and to use the consecrated elements, for any mere secular purposes, were sacrilege and profanation of the most revolting description. But any such *physical* change, as that which our Latin brethren call *transubstantiation*, she most certainly denies altogether. Hence, as I have already observed, the disagreement between the two churches mainly respects the alleged process thus denominated.

While arguing upon this subject, or while incidentally mentioning it, some persons, I regret to say, have been far too copious in the use of those unseemly terms, *absurdity* and *impossibility*. To such language the least objection is its reprehensible want of good manners: a much more serious objection is the tone of presumptuous loftiness which pervades it, and which (so far as I can judge) is wholly unbefitting a creature of very narrow faculties. Certainly, God *will* do nothing absurd, and *can* do nothing impossible; but it does not, therefore, exactly follow, that *our* view of things should be always perfectly correct and wholly free from misapprehension. Contradictions we may easily *fancy*, where in truth there *are* none. Hence, before we venture to pronounce any particular doctrine a contradiction, we must be sure

that we perfectly understand the nature of the matter propounded in that doctrine; for, otherwise, the contradiction may not be in *the matter itself*, but in *our mode of conceiving it*. In regard to myself, as my consciously finite intellect claims not to be an universal measure of congruities and possibilities, I deem it both more wise and more decorous to refrain from assailing the doctrine of transubstantiation on the ground of its alleged absurdity or contradictoriness or impossibility.

By such a mode of attack, we in reality quit the true field of rational and satisfactory argument. The doctrine of transubstantiation, like the doctrine of the trinity, is a question, not of abstract reasoning, but of pure evidence. We believe the revelation of God to be essential and unerring truth. Our business, therefore, most plainly is, not to discuss the abstract absurdity and the imagined contradictoriness of transubstantiation, but to inquire, according to the best means which we possess, whether it be indeed a doctrine of Holy Scripture. If sufficient evidence shall determine such to be the case, we may be sure that the doctrine is neither absurd nor contradictory: if the evidence be insufficient, we require not the aid of irrelevant abstract reasoning, for we *then* reject the doctrine because we have no sufficient evidence of its truth. Receiving the Scripture as the infallible word of God, and prepared with entire prostration of mind to admit *his* declarations, I shall ever contend, that the doctrine of transubstantiation, like the doctrine of the trinity, is a question of pure evidence.

I. I greatly incline to think, that, even independently of other sources of information, we may, by the aid of Scripture alone, arrive at a moral certainty, that the doctrine of transubstantiation, as received in the Latin church, must needs be erroneous. For, if it can be shown, not only that such doctrine is incongruous with the general analogy of

sacred tropical language, but also that it is irreconcilable with the very terms in which the institution of the Eucharist has been recorded, and that it directly contradicts other inspired declarations; the erroneousness of the doctrine will, I apprehend, have been demonstrated with as much moral certainty as the nature of unmathematical evidence can admit.

1. In the abstract, the expressions, *This is my body*, and *this is my blood*, are doubtless capable, either of the interpretation put upon them by the church of England, or of the interpretation put upon them by the church of Rome: for, as no one will deny, that, on the strictest principles of grammar, they *may* be understood literally; so no one, who is in the least degree conversant with the phraseology of Scripture, can deny that, on the strictest principles of rhetoric, they *may* be understood figuratively. Hence, so far as this part of the argument is concerned, the only question is, which mode of exposition best accords with the general analogy of sacred tropical language, and whether on any legitimate ground the Latin exposition can be admitted consistently with such analogy.

I need scarcely remark, that the Bible abounds with expressions, which by common consent are allowed to be plainly metaphorical. God is said to be *a sun*, and *a shield*; Christ styles himself *a vine*, and *a door*, and *a way*. Such language we instinctively perceive to be tropical: no one contends that it ought to be understood literally. Now, to the catholic of the Anglican church, these expressions appear strictly analogical to the expressions, *This is my body*, and *this is my blood*. Hence he conceives, that all the several expressions ought to be interpreted homogeneously. If the expressions, *This is my body*, and *this is my blood*, must needs be understood literally; then, so far as he can discern, the various apparently analogical expressions, *I am a vine*, and *I am a door*, and *I am a way*, must needs

be understood literally also. And, conversely, if the latter set of expressions must needs be understood figuratively; then, so far as he can perceive, homogeneity plainly requires the figurative exposition also of the former set of expressions. Unless this first principle of interpretation be admitted, he apprehends, that the exposition of Scripture becomes altogether arbitrary. Christ does not more explicitly say, of the bread and the wine, *This is my body*, and *this is my blood*, than St. Paul says of the rock, whereof the Israelites drank in in the wilderness, *The rock was Christ*.^{*} If, therefore, the catholic of the Roman church may be allowed, simply because it suits his humour, to interpret the two former expressions literally; it is difficult to say, why the catholic of the English church must not be allowed, should it haply suit his pleasure, to interpret the latter expression literally also. For, if once we depart from the fixed principle of homogeneous interpretation, a door is opened to the wildest expository licentiousness; and the Bible itself becomes a field, upon which every theological adventurer must be allowed to try his unholy experiments.

The principle of *homogeneity*, then, is the basis of the exposition advocated by the church of England; while the principle of *arbitrary variation* is the basis of the exposition advocated by the church of Rome. If the soundness of the latter principle be admitted, the Roman catholic may still be able to plead this soundness in favour of his own opinion; but, if the soundness of the former principle be absolutely undeniable, then an easy victory awaits the Anglican catholic; for, unless the figurative language of Scripture be *altogether* interpreted literally, the literal interpretation of the expressions, *This is my body*, and *this my blood*, cannot but be untenable.

^{*} Compare Matt. xxxi. 26, 28, with 1 Corinth. x. 4.

2. In his doubts as to the tenability of the Latin interpretation, the catholic of the Anglican church is confirmed by the very terms in which the institution of the Eucharist has been recorded.

The Roman catholic builds much upon the alleged expressness of our Lord's phraseology, *This is my body*, and *this is my blood*; whence he infers, that the elements, after consecration, altogether cease to be literal bread and literal wine, and that they become henceforth the literal flesh and literal blood of our Saviour Christ.

Now, to the Anglican catholic such an interpretation seems plainly at variance with the terms in which the institution of the Eucharist has been recorded both by St. Matthew and by St. Paul.

(1.) At the institution of the Eucharist, as recorded by St. Matthew, Christ is represented as saying of the liquor contained in the cup *subsequent* to its consecration, *I will not henceforth drink of THIS fruit of the vine.**

Such are the words of the Lord himself. What then was the specific nature of the fluid contained in the cup *after* this first consecration of the elements?

The Roman catholic assures us, that the liquor was *not* literal wine; on the contrary, he maintains that it was literal human blood. Christ, however, though he had previously said of that liquor, *THIS is my blood*, immediately afterward most abundantly explains the true meaning of his language, by adding, *I will not drink henceforth of THIS fruit of the vine.*

Here we have our Lord's own explanation of his own language. The liquor, which he had called *his blood*, he still denominates, even *after* consecration, *THIS fruit* or *offspring of the vine.*

If, then, the liquor, even *after* consecration, was *still* the offspring of the vine; the Anglican catholic

* Matt. xxvi. 29.

is unable to comprehend how that identical liquor can have been literal human blood. For Christ does not more explicitly say *THIS is my blood*, than he denominates the consecrated fluid, *THIS offspring of the vine*.

(2.) Exactly the same result is brought out from the strictly analogous language employed by St. Paul.

Speaking of the material substance on the patin *after* consecration, he twice denominates it *THIS bread*.*

Now what, *after* consecration, was the specific nature of that substance? The Roman catholic assures us, that the substance in question was not bread, but human flesh. St. Paul assures us, that the substance in question was not human flesh, but bread.

The Anglican catholic cannot reconcile St. Paul and his Roman brother. If the Latin interpretation be adopted, the apostle is placed at direct variance with his divine Master. For, in such case, that identical substance, which Christ declares to be his own literal flesh, Paul unreservedly pronounces to be bread.

3. In addition to this incompatibility of the Latin interpretation with the terms in which the institution of the Eucharist has been recorded, it appears, so far as the Anglican catholic can judge, directly to contradict other declarations of Holy Scripture.

(1.) St. John has preserved to us a very remarkable discourse of our Lord, which was delivered in the synagogue of Capernaum, both before the assembled Jews and before his own disciples.

On the subject of his feeding the church with his own flesh and blood, his language was so strong, that the disciples murmured, and that the Jews indignantly asked, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*†

From the tenor of the narrative, it is evident that

* 1 Corinth. xi. 26, 27.

† John vi. 52, 60, 61.

both the disciples and the Jews understood him *literally*; but then it is no less evident, that he corrected their mistake, and that he taught them to understand him *figuratively*.

It is the spirit that quickeneth, said he in manifest explanation of the words which had given so much offence; *the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.**

Our Lord himself teaches us, we see, that his language is to be interpreted *figuratively*, not *literally*. But the Roman catholic maintains, that his language is to be interpreted *literally*, not *figuratively*. The exposition of the Roman catholic, therefore, directly contradicts an inspired declaration recorded in Holy Scripture.

(2.) Nor is this the only declaration of Scripture which clashes with the Latin theory.

It was foretold by the prophet David, that God *would not suffer his Holy One to see corruption.†*

Now, St. Peter, speaking by undoubted inspiration, teaches us infallibly, that this prediction related to the circumstance of the flesh of Christ not seeing corruption according to the general lot of humanity: for, agreeably to the purport of the sacred oracle; he rose again on the third day, ere corruption had taken place.‡

The special privilege, then, of the human nature of Christ was, that his flesh should never see corruption. He would mysteriously unite the godhead to the manhood; and, as man, he would suffer and die on our behalf: but still, corruption should never invade that holy flesh, which, without confusion of substance, had been assumed into God.

Thus ran the prophecy; and thus, as St. Peter assures us, was it accurately accomplished. But, by the Latin interpretation, the purpose of God, in

* John vi. 63, † Psalm xvi. 10. ‡ Acts ii. 22—32.

regard to the human nature of Christ, is completely frustrated. So far from the Holy One of God *never* seeing corruption, the literal flesh and blood of Christ, if the doctrine of transubstantiation be true, see corruption *again and again*, by the necessary process of digestion, every revolving year and month and week.

(3.) There is yet another plain contradictoriness to Scripture, which is fatally involved in the doctrine of transubstantiation.

If we adopt the *figurative* scheme of exposition, we may innocently call the celebration of the Eucharist *a spiritual sacrifice*; for even our very prayers are allegorical sacrifices offered up to God;* but, if we adopt the *literal* scheme of exposition, we immediately produce a direct contradiction to Holy Scripture.

The doctrine of the Latin church is, that, *in the celebration of the Eucharist, the priest offers up the literal body and blood of Christ to God, as a true and proper expiatory sacrifice for the quick and the dead*. Christ, therefore, according to the decision of the Latin church, is REPEATEDLY offered.

But, in Holy Writ, we are positively assured, that Christ was offered only ONCE.†

Hence, so far as I can see, the Latin church and Holy Writ, through the agency of the doctrine of transubstantiation, are placed in direct variance with each other. The term ONCE bears a sense immediately opposite to the term REPEATEDLY. According to Scripture, *Christ is ONCE offered*; according to the Latin church, *Christ is REPEATEDLY offered*. This variation can only be reconciled by proving, that the term ONCE and the term REPEATEDLY are equipollent.

Such are the glaring contradictions to Scripture,

* Hos. xiv. 2.

† Heb. ix. 28. x. 10. 1 Pet. iii. 18.

which inevitably attend upon the doctrine of transubstantiation. How a doctrine so circumstanced can be true, it is difficult to comprehend; but, if the doctrine be erroneous, the exposition, upon which the doctrine is founded, must certainly be erroneous also. The *literal* interpretation of our Lord's words, *This is my body* and *this is my blood*, CANNOT, by any conceivable hermeneutic mechanism, be established as the true interpretation. But, if the *literal* interpretation be thus displaced by the very necessity of Scripture itself, the *figurative* interpretation must inevitably be adopted.

II. Though the figurative interpretation of our Lord's words be thus plainly required by Scripture when compared with Scripture, yet so great is the authority of the catholic church nearest to the times of the apostles, that we cannot but be anxious to ascertain the interpretation which *she* was led to prefer and to adopt.

What the apostles taught, relative to the Eucharist, must assuredly for many years have been the doctrine of the church. Through the lapse of ages, error might gradually creep in; but it could not have subsisted from the beginning. If then, during the term of several centuries, we shall find that the *figurative* interpretation was the interpretation adopted by the early catholic church, we shall possess a moral certainty of its truth. For, after we have been driven to the scheme of *figurative* interpretation by the very necessity of Scripture itself, if we find this identical scheme of interpretation adopted by the early catholic church, I see not what more decisive evidence can be reasonably desired. In that case, let the *literal* scheme have crept in when it may, it must inevitably stand forth as an unauthorized and convicted novelty. *Whatever is first, is true; whatever is more recent, is spurious.*

1. It must be confessed, that the early ecclesiastical writers frequently use language respecting the

Eucharist, which may easily either mislead the superficial theologian, or seduce the interested polemic into the iniquity of partial citation.

Thus, even in the second century, Justin remarks, that "We receive not the elements as common bread or as common wine: but, in what manner, Christ our Saviour, being made flesh through the word of God, took flesh and blood for our salvation; in like manner also we are taught, that the aliment, from which our blood and flesh are nourished by transmutation, being received with thanks through the prayer of the word instituted by himself, is the flesh and the blood of that Jesus who was made flesh."*

Thus also, in the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem teaches the catechumens who had been recently baptized: "When Christ himself hath declared and spoken concerning the bread, This is my body; who shall henceforth dare to hesitate? And, when he hath peremptorily pronounced and asserted, This is my blood; who shall venture to doubt, saying that it is not his blood? He once, at the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee; changed the water into wine; shall we not then give him credit for changing the wine into blood? If, when called to a mere corporeal marriage, he wrought that great wonder; shall we not much rather confess, that he hath given the fruition of his own body and blood to the sons of the bridegroom?"†

* Justin. Apol. i. vulg. ii. p. 76, 77.

† Cyril. Catech. Mystag. iv. p. 237. Lutet. Paris. 1631. I have selected this passage, because, so far as I know, it is the strongest which can be produced from antiquity in favour of the Latin doctrine of transubstantiation. Its strength consists in an *apparent* comparison between the *changing of the water into wine at Cana*, and the *changing of the wine into blood by the prayer of consecration*; whence an argument may immediately be constructed, that, since the change in the sacramental elements is compared to the confessedly *physical* change of the water at Cana, the change in the sacramental elements must itself be *physical* also.

These and other similiar passages, which might easily be accumulated, appear at first sight to put it out of all doubt, that the early church held a doctrine at the least very closely allied to the Latin doctrine

I. This argument would indeed be most powerful if the *apparent* comparison were a *real* comparison. But let us carefully examine the passage in Cyril; and the imagined comparison will rapidly disappear.

In the passage itself, even as it stands in an insulated form, I will be bold to say, that, upon a close inspection, *no comparison whatever* can be detected. Cyril does not *compare* the one change to the other change; but he simply *argues* from the miracle performed at Cana, just as he might argue from any other miracle, that, if the Lord could work miracles transcending the power of man, why should we doubt that he could also change the bread and wine into his own body and blood? Such is the *argument*, not the *comparison*; and it leaves the matter still undecided, whether the change in the bread and wine be *physical* or *moral*.

II. Thus would I say, even if Cyril had never written any thing on the Eucharist save the passage now before us; but, in truth, he elsewhere institutes a *real comparison*, which demonstratively proves, that the change, acknowledged by him in the consecrated elements, was simply *moral*, and in no wise *physical*.

"Ye are anointed," says he, "with ointment, and ye have become partakers of Christ. But take care, lest you deem that ointment to be mere ointment. For, as the bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is no longer mere bread, but the body of Christ; so this consecrated ointment is no longer mere or common ointment, but the free gift of Christ and the presence of the very Godhead of the Holy Spirit energetically produced. Hence ye are symbolically anointed upon the forehead and upon the other organs of sense. For with visible ointment the body is anointed; but by the holy and vivifying Spirit the soul is sanctified."—Cyril. Catech. Mystag. iii. p. 235.

In this passage, *the change produced in the sacramental elements by consecration* is directly and avowedly compared to *the change produced in the ancient chrism by consecration*. Now, confessedly, no change was ever thought to be produced in the ancient chrism by consecration, save a *moral* change; that is to say, the chrism ceased to be common ointment, and henceforth became holy ointment, which was supposed eminently to confer the graces of the Holy Spirit. Such being the case, since *the change in the consecrated elements* is *avowedly* and *illustratively* compared to *the change in the consecrated chrism*, and since *the change in the consecrated chrism* is most undoubtedly a *moral change only*; it clearly

of transubstantiation; and, accordingly, places of this description are copiously adduced by Roman controversialists: but, in truth, if we can command patience enough to hear her explain herself, we shall find that the change in the elements, which *she* recognised, was a *moral change* by which they were converted from a secular to a holy purpose, not a *physical change*, by which they were literally transmuted into human flesh and blood.

2. That such was the doctrine of the early church, is abundantly evident from the multiplied comparisons which were employed by way of illustration.

The change, wrought by consecration in the elements, is described, by Cyril and Irenæus, and the ancient Homilist in Jerome, and Gregory of Nyssa, as being similar in nature, to the change wrought by consecration in oil, or in an altar, or in a church, to the change wrought in our mortal bodies by their being made capable of immortality, to the change wrought in a layman by sacerdotal ordination, and to the change wrought in the unregenerate by the mighty efficacy of spiritual regeneration.*

follows, that, in the judgment of Cyril, the consecrated elements experience no change save a *moral change*: that is to say, in the language both of Justin and of Cyril, we receive not the elements as common bread or as common wine; for, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the bread of the Eucharist is no longer mere bread, but bread henceforth set apart from secular use to a high and sacred purpose.

I will venture to say, that no man, who thought with the modern Latins, could ever have *illustratively* compared the change in the consecrated elements to the change in the consecrated chrism: for, had Cyril held the doctrine of transubstantiation, he must incongruously have compared a *physical change* to a *moral change*.

* See Cyril. Catech. Mystag. iii. p. 235. Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iv. c. 34. § 6. Homil. de Corp. et Sang. Christ. in Hieron. oper. vol. ix. p. 212. Gregor. Nyssen. de Baptism. oper. vol. iii. p. 369.

As a specimen of the mode in which the early fathers illustrate the change wrought in the sacramental elements by the prayer of consecration, I subjoin the passage from Gregory of Nyssa referred to above.

"This altar, before which we stand," says he, "is physically 'mere common stone, differing nothing from the stones with

Now, it is difficult to comprehend, how illustrative comparisons of *this* sort could ever have been used by persons who held the favourite doctrine of the modern Roman church. According to the Latin theologians, the change, produced in the elements by consecration, is **PHYSICAL** : yet the ancients compared this change to a great variety of changes, which are purely **MORAL**. Hence, by a necessary consequence, it seems to follow, that the change, which the ancients believed to take place in the elements by virtue of consecration, was **MORAL**, not **PHYSICAL**.

‘ which our houses are built : but, after it has been consecrated by
 ‘ benediction to the service of God, it becomes a holy table, a sancti-
 ‘ fied altar. In a similar manner, the eucharistic bread is
 ‘ originally mere common bread ; but, when it has been consecrated
 ‘ in the holy mystery, it becomes, and is called the body of
 ‘ Christ. Thus also the mystic oil and the wine, though of small
 ‘ value before the benediction, work wonders after their sanctifi-
 ‘ cation by the Spirit. The same power of consecration likewise
 ‘ imprints a new and honourable character upon a priest, when
 ‘ by a new benediction he is separated from the laity. For he,
 ‘ who was previously nothing more than a common man, is
 ‘ suddenly transformed into a teacher of religion, and into a steward
 ‘ of the holy mysteries. Yet this great mutation is effected
 ‘ without any change in his bodily form and appearance. Externally,
 ‘ he is the same that he already was ; but, internally, by
 ‘ an invisible and gracious operation, a mighty change is effected
 ‘ in his soul.”

So far as I can understand Gregory, whose language perfectly accords with that of Cyril and Irenæus, and the ancient author of the Homily in Jerome, he seems to have acknowledged no change in the bread and wine by virtue of consecration, save such a change as that which is wrought in a layman when by virtue of consecration he becomes a priest. Now, the only change in the layman, as indeed Gregory most carefully informs us, is a **MORAL** change. Therefore, the only change in the bread and wine, to which this change in the layman is expressly compared, must clearly be a **MORAL** change also. No person, who held the doctrine of a **PHYSICAL** change in the elements, could possibly compare that **PHYSICAL** change to a variety of other changes, every one of which is purely **MORAL**. Hence it is evident, that the primitive church acknowledged only a **MORAL** change in the elements ; and hence nothing can be more nugatory than the conduct of the Roman controversialists, who perpetually quote the Fathers as speaking of a **PHYSICAL** change, when they most indubitably speak only of a **MORAL** change.

3. With the avowed doctrine of the early church, that the change, wrought in the elements by consecration, is not **PHYSICAL**, but **MORAL**, the language employed respecting the elements themselves will be found exactly to correspond.

Whenever the fathers descend to the strictness of explanatory definition, they plainly tell us, again and again, that the consecrated elements are only the *types*, or *figures*, or *symbols*, or *allegorical images* of the body and blood of Christ; and, not unfrequently, as if anxious to remove all possibility of misapprehension, they assure us, in express terms, that *we do not eat the literal body*, and that *we do not drink the literal blood of Christ*, when we participate of the blessed Eucharist.

The subject is so important, that they must be allowed to come forward, and in their own words to bear their own testimony.

(1.) "Inasmuch," says Clement of Alexandria, in the second century: "Inasmuch as Christ declared, 'that the bread which I give you is my flesh; and 'inasmuch as flesh is irrigated by blood; therefore 'the wine is ALLEGORICALLY CALLED blood.* For 'the word is ALLEGORICALLY DESIGNATED by many 'different names, such as meat and flesh and nourishment, and bread and blood and milk; for the Lord 'is all things for the enjoyment of us, who have 'believed in him. Nor let any one think that we 'speak strangely, when we say, that milk is ALLEGORICALLY CALLED the blood of the Lord: for is 'not wine likewise ALLEGORICALLY CALLED by the 'very same appellation?† The Scripture, then, has 'named wine A MYSTIC SYMBOL of the Holy blood.‡ 'For be well assured, that Christ also himself partook 'of wine; inasmuch as he also was a man. He 'moreover blessed the wine, saying, Take, drink;

* Clem. Alex. *Pædag.* lib. i. c. 6. p. 104.

† Ibid. p. 105.

‡ Ibid. lib. ii. c. 2. p. 156.

‘this is my blood, the blood of the vine. The consecrated liquor of exhilaration, therefore, *allegorically represents* the Word, who poured himself out on behalf of many for the remission of sins.”*

(2.) “God, in your Gospel,” says Tertullian, who flourished at the latter end of the second, and at the beginning of the third century, “has so revealed the matter, calling the bread his own body, that you may hence understand how he gave bread to be *the figure* of his own body: which body, conversely, the prophet *has figuratively called* bread, the Lord himself being afterward about to interpret this sacrament.† For we must not call our senses in question, lest we should doubt respecting their fidelity even in the case of Christ himself. Because, if we question the fidelity of our senses, we might peradventure be led to say, that Christ delusively beheld Satan precipitated from heaven, or delusively heard the voice of his Father testifying of him, or was deceived when he touched Peter’s mother-in-law, or smelt a different odour of the ointment which he received for his sepulture, or tasted a different flavour of *the wine which he consecrated* in memory of his own blood.‡ Christ reprobated neither the water of the Creator with which he washes his people, nor the oil with which he anoints them, nor the fellowship of honey and milk with which he feeds them as infants, nor the bread by which *he represents* his own body: for, even in his own sacraments, he needs the beggarly elements of the Creator.”§

(3.) “By water,” says Cyprian, in the third century, speaking of the ancient custom of mingling water with wine in the eucharist: “By water, we perceive, that the people *is intended*; but, by wine, we may observe, that the blood of Christ *is*

* Ibid. lib. ii. c. 2. p. 158.

† Tertull. adv. Marcion. lib. iii. § 12, 13. p. 209.

‡ Tertull. de Anim. in cap. de quinque sens. oper. p. 653.

§ Tertull. adv. Marcion. lib. i. § 9. oper. p. 155.

shown forth. Hence, when water is mingled with wine in the cup, the people are united to Christ, and the whole crowd of believers are linked and joined to him in whom they have believed. For, if wine only be offered, the blood of Christ is without the people; and, if water only be offered, the people is without Christ. But, when both are mingled and united together, then the spiritual and heavenly sacrament is complete.”*

(4.) “With all assurance,” says Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century, “let us partake as of the body and blood of Christ. For, *under the type* of bread, his body is given to thee; and, *under the type* of wine, his blood is given to thee: that so thou mayest partake of the body and blood of Christ, being one body and one blood with him.”†

(5.) “Under the name of flesh,” says Chrysostom in the fourth century, “Scripture is wont alike to set forth both the mysteries and the whole church: for it says, that they are *each* the body of Christ.‡ Wherefore let there approach no Judas, partaking of the poison of iniquity; for the Eucharist is *spiritual food*.”§

(6.) “The Lord,” says the great Augustine, in the fourth century, “when he gave *the sign* of his body, did not doubt to say, This is my body. || In the history of the New Testament, so great and so marvellous was the patience of our Lord, that, bearing with Judas, though not ignorant of his purpose, he admitted him to the banquet, in which he commended and delivered to his disciples *the figure* of his own body and blood. ¶ Christ instructed his

* Cyprian. Epist. Cæcil. lxxiii. p. 153, 154. Oxon. 1682.

† Cyril. Catech. Mystag. iv. p. 217.

‡ Chrysost. Comment. in Epist. ad Galat. c. v. oper. vol. ix. p. 1022. Commel. 1603.

§ Chrysost. de Prodit. Jud. Serm. xxx. oper. vol. v. p. 464.

|| August. cont. Adimant. c. xii. oper. vol. vi. p. 69. Colon. 1616.

¶ August. Enarr. in Psalm. iii. oper. vol. viii. p. 7.

‘disciples, and said unto them, It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words, which I speak unto you, are spirit and life. As if he had said: *Understand spiritually* what I have spoken. You are *not* about to eat this identical body, which you see; and you are *not* about to drink this identical blood, which they who crucify me will pour out. On the contrary, I have commended a certain sacrament unto you, which will vivify you *if spiritually understood*. Though it must be celebrated visibly, yet it must be understood invisibly.”*

(7.) “Certainly,” says Pope Gelasius in the fifth century, “the sacraments of the body and blood of the Lord, which we receive, are a divine thing: because by these we are made partakers of the divine nature. Nevertheless, *the substance or nature of the bread and wine ceases not to exist*; and, assuredly, *the image and similitude* of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in the action of the mysteries.”†

(8.) “The sacrament of adoption,” says Facundus in the sixth century, “may be called adoption: just as the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, which is in the consecrated bread and wine, we are wont to call his body and blood. *Not*, indeed, that the bread is *properly* his body, or that the wine is *properly* his blood, but because they contain the mystery of his body and blood within themselves. Hence it was, that our Lord denominated the consecrated bread and wine, which he delivered to his disciples, his own body and blood.”‡

4. It were easy to multiply extracts of a similar description; but these may suffice. Respecting the greater part of them, it is superfluous to offer any

* August. Enarr. in Psalm. xcvi. oper. vol. viii. p. 397.

† Gelas. de duab. Christ. Natur. cont. Nestor. et Eutych. in Biblioth. Patr. vol. iv. p. 422.

‡ Facund. Defens. Concil. Chalced. lib. ix. c. 5. oper. p. 144.

remarks. They speak for themselves; and their force cannot be heightened by the observations of a protestant commentator. One, however, of the cited passages may possibly be rendered even yet more striking and satisfactory by a word of explanation.

Clement of Alexandria, in a manner which cannot easily be misunderstood, informs us, as we have seen, that *the consecrated wine ALLEGORICALLY REPRESENTS the blood of the divine Word.** In the citation, nothing save this bare statement appears: a statement quite satisfactory no doubt; but still a *bare* statement. From a simple extract, the *argument*, contained in the context, of necessity vanishes; yet that *argument*, when connected with the statement, renders it doubly forcible and efficacious. Hence I must not withhold it from those who may not have an opportunity of consulting the original.

In the days of Clement, certain sectaries, who bore the name of *Encratites*, contended that the use of wine was unlawful. Against these enthusiasts, Clement brings a variety of arguments; and, among them, he takes occasion to construct one very powerful argument upon the use of wine in the Eucharist. His argument is to the following effect:—

Christ himself consecrated true and proper wine in the institution of the Eucharist. This consecrated wine he himself commanded his disciples to drink. THEREFORE, on the invincible authority of our Saviour Christ, the use of wine cannot but be lawful.

Thus runs the *argument* of Clement against the Encratites, in the context of the passage where he tells us, that *the holy wine ALLEGORICALLY REPRESENTS the blood of Christ*. Now, according to the scheme of *figurative* interpretation adopted by the church of England, the argument is perfectly conclusive; but it is grossly inconclusive, according to the

* Clem. Alex. *Pædag.* lib. ii. c. 2. p. 158.

scheme of *literal* interpretation adopted by the church of Rome. Had Clement held with the Latin catholic, that the consecrated liquor, drunk by the disciples was *not wine*, but *proper and literal human blood*, he plainly could never have argued, from the fact of the disciples having drunk *literal human blood*, that the use of *wine* was strictly lawful. On the supposition, at least, of his having been a transubstantialist, he must actually have reasoned as follows:—

Whatever Christ ordains is lawful. But the disciples, by Christ's special ordination, drank literal human blood. THEREFORE the use of wine is lawful.

Between such premises and such a conclusion, there is evidently not the least connexion; and yet, if Clement were a transubstantialist, this most assuredly must have been the mode in which he reasoned. But no man of common sense *could* argue with such gross absurdity. Hence we may be certain, that Clement never *did* thus argue: and hence, finally, we may be certain also, from the very tenor of his own argument against the Encratites, that he was *not* a transubstantialist.

His argument and his statement, in short, perfectly accord. From *the authorized use of wine in the Eucharist*, he demonstrates *the lawfulness of the use of wine in general*; and, in strict agreement with such an argument, he tells us, that the consecrated wine, not *LITERALLY* IS, but *ALLEGORICALLY REPRESENTS*, the blood of Christ.

An argument against the Encratites, when built upon this statement, is doubtless invincibly conclusive: but then Clement himself, without incurring the least censure from his contemporaries, will symbolize, in the doctrine of the Eucharist, with the church of England, not with the church of Rome.

CHAPTER V.

Respecting the Latin Defence of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation from the Language employed by our Lord.

WERE the doctrine of Transubstantiation capable of defence, the task would have been accomplished by the bishop of Aire. If its cause fail in the hands of such a master, we must indeed pronounce that cause to be desperate.

The bishop's first argument in favour of the doctrine of transubstantiation is drawn from the words of Christ himself, as recorded in Holy Scripture.*

I. Previous to the specific institution of the Eucharist, Christ is said by St. John to have delivered, in the synagogue of Capernaum, before the Jews and his own disciples, a very remarkable discourse, in which he declared *the necessity of eating the flesh of the Son of Man and of drinking his blood.*†

It may perhaps be recollected, that upon this identical discourse was built one of my own arguments from Scripture, *against* the doctrine of transubstantiation.‡ Yet so very differently does the same passage sometimes strike different persons, that the bishop has constructed upon it what he deems a conclusive argument *in favour* of that doctrine.

When Christ declared the necessity of eating the flesh of the Son of Man and of drinking his blood, both the Jews and the disciples understood him in a

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. vi, vii.

† John vi. 26—65.

‡ See above, Book i. chap. 4. § I. 3. (1.)

literal sense; and, accordingly, they were vehemently offended. Now, as *they* understood our Lord at the time when the discourse was delivered, the bishop contends that *we* also ought to understand it at the present day.

1. His lordship is far too able a controversialist not to perceive, that the main question hinges upon a subsequent most important declaration of our Saviour.

Certainly, the Jews and the disciples understood our Lord to speak *literally*: but, before we adopt their opinion, we must have some evidence of its *propriety*. Now, Christ's own exposition of his own words fully demonstrates, in the judgment of many persons, that the Jews and the disciples had hastily taken up an *erroneous* opinion. Finding that his auditors understood him *literally*, he assured them that they were mistaken, and that he meant to have been understood *figuratively*.

*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.**

In this manner did our Lord explain the words which had given so much offence; and, if his explanation be understood as protestants commonly understand it, the passage, adduced by the bishop in support of his cause, is in truth decidedly *adverse*. Hence, as we might naturally expect from so intelligent a writer, he sets himself to discover a sense for Christ's explanation, which shall not compel him to relinquish the advocated doctrine as altogether untenable.

It is well known, he remarks, that, in the ordinary style of Scripture, *the flesh* often signifies *the corporeal senses*, or *the carnal and corrupt reason of man*; while *the spirit* denotes *the grace of God*, or *the inspiration of the Holy Ghost*. Our Lord, then,

* John vi. 63.

here declares, that the flesh or the corrupt reason of man profits nothing to discover and to believe that which he has announced. The real manducation of his literal flesh and blood is a matter at which the carnal or natural man has ever stumbled. Such a doctrine can be received by the spirit alone. The words spoken by Christ are indeed spirit and life; but then they are spirit and life solely to that spiritual man, who, renouncing the flesh or corrupt reason, is enabled by the grace of God to understand them literally.*

I must confess, that the present appears to me a somewhat extraordinary description of the two states of the carnal man and the spiritual man.

If we may believe the bishop of Aire, the carnal man displays his carnality by adopting the spiritual interpretation of our Lord's phraseology; while the spiritual man evinces his spirituality by preferring the carnal interpretation.

Such a description may perhaps be thought paradoxical; and such a gloss will, I fear, satisfy none, except those who are already satisfied. The true meaning of our Lord's explanation will still be litigated: nor do I perceive how the matter is to be decided, save by the calling in of an umpire. Let that umpire then be the primitive church, speaking through the mouth of certain of her most eminent doctors. To such an arbitration, the bishop, who repeatedly claims ecclesiastical antiquity as his own, cannot reasonably object; and to such an arbitration I myself am perfectly willing to submit our difference.

What then say the early writers of the church, as to the true purport of our Lord's explanatory declaration? Do they understand it, as the bishop of Aire is willing to understand it; or do they interpret it as it is commonly interpreted by protestants?

* Discuss. Amic. vol. i. p. 265—267.

Assuredly they prefer the protestant interpretation; for we find Tertullian, Augustine, Athanasius, and Clement of Alexandria, all concurring in the supposition, that our Lord meant to correct the *mistake* into which the Jews and the disciples had fallen, and to teach them that his words ought to be understood, not *literally*, but *figuratively*. On this point, these great doctors of the church are full and explicit and unambiguous. They all quote our Saviour's declaration; and, expounding it precisely as we protestants expound it, they all pronounce upon the strength of it, that his antecedent language, respecting the necessity of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man, ought to be interpreted, not *literally* and *carnally*, but *figuratively* and *spiritually*.*

* Tertull. de Resur. Carn. § xxviii. oper. p. 69. August. Enarr. in Psalm. xcvi. oper. vol. viii. p. 397. Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. i. c. 6. p. 104. Athan. in illud Evan. Quicumque dixerit verbum contra filium hominis. Oper. vol. i. p. 771, 772. Commel. 1600.

That it may be the more distinctly seen how widely the ancients differed from the bishop of Aire, I subjoin, as a specimen, the gloss of Athanasius.

"When our Lord conversed on the eating of his body, and 'when he thence beheld many scandalized, he forthwith added, 'Doth this offend you? What if ye shall behold the Son of Man 'ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth: 'the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you 'are spirit and life. Both these matters, the flesh and the spirit, 'he said respecting himself: and he distinguished the spirit from 'the flesh, in order to teach men, that his sayings are not carnal 'but spiritual. For to how many persons, think you, could his 'body have literally been food; so that it might become the aliment of the whole world? But, that he might turn away their 'minds from carnal cogitations, and that they might learn that the 'flesh which he would give them was heavenly and spiritual food; 'he, on this account, mentioned the ascent of the Son of Man to 'heaven. The words, said he, which I speak unto you, are spirit 'and life. As if he had intimated: My body shall be given as food 'for the world; but then it must be imparted to each one only 'after a spiritual manner, that so to all it may be an earnest of the 'resurrection to eternal life."

The gloss of Augustine is equally full and explicit against the bishop of Aire. I have already given it at large. See above, Book i. chap. 4. § II. 3. (6.)

Such authorities place the bishop of Aire in a situation which is in no wise enviable. If he retain his own gloss of our Lord's explanatory declaration, he contradicts four of the most eminent doctors of the early church: if he adopt the gloss, propounded alike by those ancient doctors and by modern protestants, he must inevitably give up the theory of transubstantiation.

2. But, though the gloss projected by the learned prelate enjoys not the high sanction of the ancients, still he contends, that its propriety, however modern it may be, is evinced by the very behaviour of the disciples.

Had they been satisfied (he argues) with our Lord's explanation of the hard saying which had given them so much offence, they would have remained with him. But we are told, that from that time many of his disciples went back and walked with him no more.* Therefore (the bishop infers) they were *not* satisfied with his explanation; and, consequently, the purport of his explanation cannot be, that his flesh and his blood were to be received only after a spiritual manner.

The argument is more ingenious than conclusive. His lordship assumes, that the stubborn Jews and the apostatizing disciples would have been quite satisfied, if they had understood our Lord's explanation as Tertullian and Clement and Augustine and Athanasius understand it. Whence he argues, that they did *not* so understand it, because they were *not* satisfied.

Now, the justice of this assumption, which forms the very basis of the bishop's argument, I must take leave to doubt.

The idea of *THE PRECEPTS of a teacher being spiritually meat and drink* was perfectly familiar to the Jews; and, as such, it would clearly have given

* John vi. 66.

them no offence:* but the idea of **THE TEACHER HIMSELF** *becoming the aliment of his disciples* must have been altogether new to them; and I strongly suspect, that, from their prejudiced minds, the offence of such a doctrine would not be removed even by a spiritualizing explanation.

According to the rules of just reasoning, the bishop must establish the validity of his assumption before he can be allowed to argue from it. For my own part, I deny its validity altogether: for I believe, that, even when our Lord had given a spiritualizing explanation of his offensive language, the Jews and the apostatizing disciples were still scandalized at the strange and novel idea of **A TEACHER** *becoming the aliment of his pupils*, however that idea might be softened to them.

It may be added, what the bishop wholly overlooks, that our Lord's discourse contained much to offend them, beside his asserting the necessity of their eating his flesh and drinking his blood; and I take it, that the general impression left upon their minds was, that he was a dealer in unintelligible paradoxes, from whom much offence and little useful instruction could be received. Under the mingled operation of these feelings, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.

II. From the preparatory discourse at Capernaum, the bishop passes to the specific institution of the Eucharist.

1. On this subject he justly remarks, that, when Christ ordained that sacrament, his phraseology could not but have forcibly recalled to the minds of his disciples the language which he had previously held in the synagogue at Capernaum. Whence he argues, that, as they understood him *literally* on the one

* See Ezek. iii. 1—11. Prov. ix. 5. Eccclus. xxiv. 21. Phil. Jud. Leg. Alleg. lib. ii. p. 90.

occasion, they would also understand him *literally* on the other occasion.

The conclusiveness of the present argument depends entirely upon the establishment or the non-establishment of the bishop's opinion relative to the matters which occurred at Capernaum. Now the totally different views of that question taken by his lordship and myself, bring us of necessity to totally different views of the language employed by Christ in the institution of the Eucharist. The bishop, maintaining that Christ was from first to last *literally* understood by the disciples in the synagogue at Capernaum, maintains also, that he was *literally* understood by them at the institution of the holy supper. I, on the contrary, maintaining, on the ground of Christ's own explanation as interpreted and received in the early church, that he was at length *figuratively* understood by the disciples at Capernaum, maintain, that he was also *figuratively* understood by them at the institution of the Eucharist. Under this aspect, therefore, the matter resolves itself into the question, which of the two litigants has most satisfactorily established his opinion in regard to the purport of Christ's language at Capernaum.

2. While the bishop thus argues, with whatever cogency, in favour of the literal interpretation of the language employed by Christ in the institution of the Eucharist, he brings forward also certain objections to that figurative interpretation of it which is preferred and adopted by the church of England.

(1.) He urges, that, previous to the institution of the Eucharist, bread had never been taken as a sign of our Lord's body. Whence he contends, that the consecrated bread cannot be legitimately viewed as a sign or type, or image or symbol.*

With the *ostensible* premises of this argument I am little concerned. They may be very true, as the

* Discuss. Amic. vol. i. p. 293, 294.

bishop thinks: or they may be very false, as the early fathers of the church believe.* With the *ostensible* premises I concern not myself: my business is with the conclusion. Now that conclusion strikes me as altogether unwarrantable. Let the objection of the bishop be disguised as it may, when thrown into a regular form, it will run as follows:—

Unless a word has already been used figuratively, we have no right so to interpret it in any particular instance. But the word BREAD was never used figuratively as denoting Christ's body, previous to the institution of the Eucharist. Therefore the figurative interpretation of it, in the case of the Eucharist, is inadmissible.

Such, when regularly drawn out, is the bishop's argument. In his own statement of it, the *true* premises are altogether concealed; and certain *spurious* premises, which may be very accurate or which may be very inaccurate, so far as matter of fact is concerned, are alone brought forward to notice. The bishop makes his conclusion to depend upon the alleged circumstance, that, *previous to the institution of the Eucharist, bread had never been taken as a sign of our Lord's body*: whereas the conclusion really depends upon the proposition, that *unless a word has already been used figuratively, we have no right so to interpret it in any particular instance*. Now the utter falsehood of this proposition must be plain to the very meanest capacity. If it be received as true, it will indeed make short work with the whole family of metaphors: for it is quite clear, that, if *previous use by earlier writers* be necessary to consti-

* To a person so well skilled as the bishop in the works of the ancient fathers, I do not think it necessary to point out, by a formal adduction of instances, how perpetually they consider bread and wine, when mentioned in the Old Testament, to be signs or figures of our Lord's body and blood. Two of the most favourite passages, adduced for this purpose, are Gen. xiv. 18. and Gen. xlix. 11.

tute a legitimate metaphor, no metaphor whatsoever can be in existence; inasmuch as, at *some* period or *other*, every metaphor must have been used for the first time.

(2.) The bishop attempts to show, that the expressions, *I am the door* and *I am the vine*, are NOT homogeneous with the expressions, *This is my body* and *This is my blood*. Whence he contends, that the homogeneous scheme of interpretation, insisted upon by the church of England, is certainly untenable.*

I am unable to comprehend the force of the reasoning, by which he would disprove the homogeneity of those several expressions. To members of his own communion, who may perceive what I unfortunately cannot perceive, his reasoning will doubtless appear valid; but it will have small weight with those, who have not been already convinced through some other medium. I claim not to be a very profound rhetorician; but, after all the labour which the bishop has bestowed upon the subject, the expressions, *I am the door* and *I am the vine*, and *This is my body* and *This is my blood*, strike upon my own apprehension, as being strictly homogeneous, and as being alike figurative or metaphorical. In the construction of them I can see no difference. The fault may be my own; but such is the fact. When Christ says, *I am the door*; both the bishop and myself understand him to speak figuratively: when he says of the consecrated bread, *This is my body*; I am unable to perceive, why I MUST NOT understand him to speak figuratively, and why I MUST understand him to speak literally.†

* Discuss. Amic. vol. i. p. 295.

† The bishop of Meaux, much in the same manner as the bishop of Aire, attempts to make out a case, that, while the expression *I am the vine* MUST be figuratively interpreted, the expression *This is my blood* MUST be literally interpreted. Hist. des Variat. livr. ii. § 26, 27.

His case works no conviction in my own mind; and, apparently, it would have met with no better success, had it been propounded to the ancient fathers. The speaker, at least, in Theodoret's Dialogues, who bears the characteristic name of *Orthodoxus*, and who argues *against* the doctrine of a physical change in the consecrated elements then first propounded by the Eutychian heretics, contends, that our Lord honoured the visible symbols with the name of his body and blood; ~~BECAUSE~~ he had previously called himself *a vine*. Hence it is clear, that the orthodox church of the fifth century understood the two expressions, *I am the vine* and *This is my blood*, in the same sense: that is to say, she alike understood them *figuratively* or *metaphorically*. See Theodor. Dial. i. oper. vol. iv. p. 17, 18. Lut. Paris, 1642. The reader will find the entire passage cited below, Book i. chap. 8. § I. 1.

I

CHAPTER VI.

Respecting the Latin Defence of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, from the secret Discipline of the early Church.

THERE are few matters of theological antiquity more curious and extraordinary, than the secret discipline of the early Christian church.*

Assuredly, as the bishop of Aire most justly remarks, those persons greatly err, who would place the rise of this institution no higher than the fourth century. Origen, in the third century, perpetually refers to it; and its existence in the second century may clearly be gathered from the writings of Tertulian and Clement of Alexandria. I am myself unable to trace it, at least distinctly, any higher than those fathers. Justin may *possibly* allude to it: but I cannot venture to hazard an *assertion* respecting the words of that ancient author.*

The bishop thinks, that this discipline originated with the apostles themselves; and he attempts, by various authorities, to make good his opinion.

I more than doubt, whether he has succeeded. He shows indeed, what we all knew, that the primitive christians, from a lawful wish to escape persecution, conducted their worship secretly *in regard to the pagans*: but this is a very different thing from that discipline of the early church, which was conducted secretly *in regard to the catechumens*. The rise of

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. viii.

† See Justin. Apol. i. vulg. ii. p. 55.

the last, I incline to think, cannot be placed higher than about the middle of the second century; and both its mechanism and its phraseology show, not obscurely, its true origin.

St. Paul, more especially when writing to the Gentile churches, often alludes, with great felicity, to the rites and ceremonies of the pagans. Among other matters, he, again and again, refers most pointedly to the ancient mysteries.* This last illustrative idea was caught up, more eagerly than wisely, by the governors of the church, *apparently*, as I have said, about the middle of the second century. The pagans had their venerable mysteries, into which none were admitted unless they had passed through a long previous novitiate: St. Paul might be supposed to countenance the establishment of yet more venerable Christian mysteries. Accordingly, the church soon determined to have an institution of this nature, into which none should be admitted without passing through the long probationary stage of catechumenism. Henceforth then, with an ill-advised imitation of gentilism, the bishop or officiating presbyter was made to correspond with the hierophant; the deacon, with the daduchus; the catechumen, with the aspirant; and the baptized communicant, with the illuminated epopt. Such was the mechanism of this singular institution; and the man must be ill-versed in the compositions of the early ecclesiastical writers, who has not observed a studied adaptation of language plainly enough borrowed from the phraseology of the pagan mysteries.†

* Rom. xi. 25, xvi. 25—27. 1 Corinth. ii. 4—8. xv. 47—51. Coloss. i. 26—28. ii. 1—4. iv. 2—5. Ephes. i. 9, 10, 16—18. v. 31, 32.

† See Tertull. Apol. adv. Gent. p. 821. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v. p. 574—579. Origen. in Levit. Homil. ix. Comment. in Johan. Oper. vol. ii. p. 97, 98. Lactant. Instit. lib. vii. § 26. Cyril. Hieros. Præfat. in Catech. p. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9. Chrysost. Sanct. Miss. in Oper. vol. iv. p. 607.

Now the theory of the bishop, as might be anticipated from the purport of his work, is this.

The secret discipline of the primitive church had for its *sole* cause the doctrine of transubstantiation: for, in the very nature of things, *it could not possibly have had any other cause than that which is thus assigned to it.* Hence it will follow, that the *grand*, and *exclusive*, and *special* secret of the Christian mysteries was the doctrine of transubstantiation.*

I. It is easy to exhibit a favourite theory under a plausible aspect; and to his own theory this service has been rendered, in an eminent degree, by the deeply-learned bishop of Aire.

In the primitive church, he argues, a most extraordinary system of secret discipline was established. The *sole* object of this discipline was to conceal, from the pagan on the one hand, and from the catechumen on the other hand, the true doctrine of the Eucharist. What then could be that *single* doctrine, which was *exclusively* guarded with so much jealous care, while every other doctrine was freely exposed to the public gaze? Could it have been the doctrine of the Eucharist, according to the Anglican interpretation of our Lord's phraseology? The supposition is incredible: for no satisfactory reason can be given, why *such* a doctrine should have been so jealously concealed from the uninitiated. Nothing then remains but the conclusion, that the real secret of the Christian mysteries was the doctrine of the Eucharist, according to the Roman interpretation of our Lord's phraseology. Admit this opinion; and the whole conduct of the primitive believers becomes lucidly intelligible. Reject this opinion; and their

* Or je me flatte à présent, Monsieur, que vous voyez clairement que la discipline du secret sur l'Eucharistie a eu effectivement le dogme de la réalité pour cause, et n'a pu en avoir d'autre. Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 2.

whole conduct is a tissue of unaccountable inconsistencies.

Thus argues the bishop of Aire; and such is the impression which he would leave upon the mind of his reader. Yet I can safely say, that, if his work produces such an impression, it produces an impression which but ill accords with the testimony of the ancients.

Let us, however, proceed to a discussion of the theory, which, with no small dexterity, his lordship has undertaken to advocate.

1. The bishop asserts, as the very basis of his argument, that the true doctrine of the Eucharist, whatever that doctrine might be, whether it were the doctrine taught by the church of England or the doctrine taught by the church of Rome, was the *sole* and *exclusive* secret of the ancient Christian mysteries.*

I acknowledge the force of the bishop's reasoning from this position: but, unfortunately, the position itself rests not upon any solid foundation. His argument is avowedly built upon the alleged fact, that *the true doctrine of the Eucharist was the EXCLUSIVE secret of the Christian mysteries*. Now, for the allegation of this pretended fact, the bishop has no authority whatever. Let the true doctrine of the Eucharist be what it may, that doctrine was NOT the *exclusive* secret of the Christian mysteries. On the contrary, as we shall soon learn from positive evidence, the mysteries propounded *many* secrets; and those *many* secrets were no other than the whole circle of the higher and peculiar doctrines of Christianity. Thus perishes the argument from the alleged fact of *exclusiveness*.

2. Still it may be said, that, although the mysteries were not instituted *exclusively* for the purpose of concealing from the profane the true doctrine of

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 2.

that more than a single short hint is given of the doctrine of the Eucharist; and it is couched in language not very favourable to the theory of transubstantiation. *If the Lord shall deem thee worthy, thou shalt hereafter know, that the body of Christ, according to the gospel, sustained the type of bread.** It is difficult to say what these words can mean, if they do not intimate, that the bread is a type or symbol or figure or representation of Christ's most precious body. They contain, however, a promise, that the subject shall hereafter be resumed; and, accordingly, it reappears in the mystagogical lectures. These, as I have observed, are five in number. The two first treat of baptism, which the persons addressed had recently received: the two next treat of the Eucharist: the last is chiefly practical, save that it contains an allusion to prayers for the dead; which had then begun to be partially introduced, which Cyril owns were objected to by many, and which he attempts, though not very cogently, to defend and vindicate.

From the brief, though accurate, account of Cyril's lectures to the illuminated and to the initiated, let any impartial person judge, what must in common equity be deemed the *principal* secret of the christian mysteries. Certainly, it was the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Accordingly, Cyril himself reduces every subordinate and dependent doctrine under that grand and ineffable mystery, viewing it, and speaking of it, as the common centre of the whole circle of christianity.

"These mysteries," says he, "the church communicates to him who is quitting the class of the catechumens. For it is not customary to reveal them to the heathens: nor do we propound to a heathen the mysteries concerning *the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost*. Neither yet do we openly

* Cyril. Catech. xiii. p. 130, 131.

‘speak concerning them to the catechumens: but we often speak many things covertly; in order that the faithful who know them may understand us, and in order that the catechumens who are ignorant of them may not be injured.’*

(2.) The result, to which we have been brought by this examination of the lectures of Cyril, is confirmed by the authority of Jerome.

That eminent father, when mentioning the ancient practice of revealing the mysteries to the illuminated, during the course of the forty days which immediately preceded their baptism at Easter, is so absorbed by the idea of the *palmary* secret, that he notices that secret *alone*, as if it were *exclusively* the subject of the arcane discipline.

“We have a custom,” says he to Pammachius, ‘of publicly delivering to those who are about to be baptized, during the forty days which precede their baptism, the mystery of the *holy and adorable Trinity*.’†

To this custom of the probaptismal lectures being delivered during Lent, antecently to the celebration of baptism at Easter, Cyril, as we might well anticipate, specially alludes.

“You must pardon me to-day for my prolixity,” says he to the illuminated: “your attention may perhaps be fatigued; but the holy festival of Easter is now approaching.”‡

(3.) With Cyril and Jerome agrees Origen, the learned catechist of Alexandria in the third century.

No one can have perused the commentary on St. John by this great writer, without perceiving that, from first to last, it is absolutely full of references to the arcane discipline of the early church.§ What

* Cyril. Catech. vi. p. 60.

† Hieron. Epist. lxi. ad Pammach. c. 4. Oper. vol. i. p. 180.

‡ Cyril. Catech. xvii. p. 201.

§ See Orig. Comment in Johan. p. 6, 8, 9, 18, 25, 30, 51—54, 57, 97, 125, 126, 203.

then, according to Origen, was that *grand* secret of the mysteries, which so threw every *minor* secret into the background, that the catechist was tempted, like Jerome, to mention it, as if it were in a manner the *only* secret?

"This," says he "it was fit to know, that, as the law affords a shadow of good things to come, made manifest by the law which is preached according to the truth: so likewise the gospel, which is fancied to be understood by all those who indiscriminately address themselves to it, teaches only a shadow of the mysteries of Christ. But what John calls the everlasting gospel, or what might fitly be styled the spiritual gospel, clearly sets forth, to those who really understand it, all things, even before their very faces, concerning the Son of God; wherefore it is necessary to Christianize, both spiritually and corporeally: and, where indeed it is fit to preach the corporeal gospel, saying to the carnal, that we know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified; this must be done: but, when they shall have become firmly compacted in the spirit, and when they shall bring forth fruit in it; then, as loving the heavenly wisdom, we may safely impart to them the hidden doctrine respecting the ascent of the incarnate Word to the state in which he was with God in the beginning."*

I need scarcely remark, that, in this passage, as the whole of its previous context shows, *the carnal* are the yet uninitiated and imperfectly instructed catechumens; while *the lovers of heavenly wisdom* are the *competentes* or illuminated, to whom, as preparatory to their baptism, the mysteries were about to be revealed. These two different classes are treated after a very different manner. To the former, general truths are alone propounded, through the medium of what Origen calls *the corporeal gospel*: to the

* Orig. Comment. in Johan. p. 9.

latter, through the medium of what he denominates *the spiritual gospel*, the divinity of the incarnate Word, and his eternal union with the Father and the Spirit, are unreservedly imparted as the sum and substance of the Christian myteries.*

* It may be useful to remark, that this passage, and two other parallel passages in the same commentary (Comment. p. 49, 52), have been adduced by Dr. Priestley for the express purpose of demonstrating, that, in the days of Origen, *the great multitude of Gentile Christians were generally anti-trinitarians, who rejected with abhorrence the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity.* Hist. of Early Opin. book iii. chap. 13, sect. 2. Works, vol. vi. p. 483.

In a professed historian, such a total ignorance of ecclesiastical antiquity is indeed most lamentable. Dr. Priestley, incredible as such an error may well seem, has actually mistaken *a very peaceable body of primitive catechumens, to whom, in the course of their religious institution, the higher mysteries of Christianity had not as yet been communicated:* Dr. Priestley has actually mistaken these primitive catechumens, for *a mighty army of strenuous and voluble anti-trinitarian confessors!*

Scarcely less extraordinary is another closely-connected error, which, in the same section of his work, the historian has fallen into, relative to a passage in Tertullian.

For the avowed purpose of showing, that, *in the time of that father, the majority of believers were anti-trinitarians, who held the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ in abhorrence;* Dr. Priestley adduces a place, in which Tertullian, after tritely remarking that the bulk of believers must, in the very nature of things, be ALWAYS composed of ignorant men, proceeds to censure the then novel heresy of the Patripassians. Now, according to Dr. Priestley, the persons, censured by Tertullian, were *a mighty majority, who held the doctrine of Christ's Godhead in abhorrence.* Whereas, in truth, these very persons, *whose majority Tertullian never asserts, absolutely identified the Son with the Father and the Spirit:* and thence contended, that *our Lord, by whatever economical name he might be distinguished, was himself God exclusively.*—Hist. of Early Opin. book iii. chap. 13, sect. 2. Works, vol. vi. p. 486. Tertull. adv. Prax. § ii. iii. Oper. p. 406.

The mischief which results from productions of such a stamp as Dr. Priestley's two Histories, is almost incalculable. That author bears a high name among persons of his own religious sentiments; and, by the unlearned or half-learned of his party, all his strange errors are greedily swallowed without any further examination.

Of this indiscriminating appetite we have a remarkable instance afforded us, in a small book, lately published under the title of *Letters in Defence of Unitarianism, by another Barrister.*

(4.) We are still brought to the very same position by the great Augustine of Hippo.

Like Cyril of Jerusalem, that luminary of the fourth age has bequeathed to us a course of lectures, addressed to those more advanced catechumens, who were styled *the illuminated*, and who were preparing themselves to receive the sacrament of baptism. The work is comprised in four books; and, with the exception of three brief *allusions to*, not *explanations of*, the doctrine of the Eucharist, it is wholly occupied in developing the grand secret of the Holy Trinity, with those other subordinate mysteries which depend upon that grand secret.*

(5.) With the evidence afforded by the fathers of the church agrees also the testimony borne by the gentiles.

When we recollect the various apologies and other controversial works produced by the early ecclesiastical writers, in which they distinctly propound the doctrines of Christ's Godhead and the Trinity, we shall not wonder, that the principal secret of the mysteries was more or less known even to the

Full of the most unsuspecting simplicity, the heedless author of this book has implicitly copied from Dr. Priestley all that historian's mistakes relative to the passages in Origen and Tertullian. With the anonymous barrister, as with the ecclesiastical historian, Origen's *uninitiated catechumens* are *zealous systematic anti-trinitarians*: while Tertullian's *patripassian worshippers of Christ as God exclusively*, assume the unlooked-for aspect of *persons who held the doctrine of Christ's Godhead in abhorrence*.

Nor is the barrister the only writer, who has been so unhappily misled by Dr. Priestley. The manifold errors of the unskilful historian have been industriously repeated by various other inferior workmen; and, on the insecure authority of Dr. Priestley, the saying, that, *in the days of Tertullian and Origen, religionists, who abhorred the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, were the greater part of Christians*, is commonly reported among the unitarians until this day.

* August. de Symbol. ad Catech. Oper. vol. ix. The three brief allusions to the Eucharist will be found in lib. ii. c. 1, p. 260, lib. ii. c. 6, p. 263, lib. iii. c. 5, p. 268.

pagans.* In fact, though the early church adopted a system of secret discipline, she still knew and judged wisely, that there might be times when it became her to speak aloud, plainly and unreservedly. Under such circumstances, even pagan testimony, in regard to the grand secret of the Christian mysteries, may be adduced not unprofitably.

Among the works of Lucian is usually printed a very curious dialogue, entitled, *Philopatris*. Its author is unknown; but, in regard to the time of its composition, Gesner seems to have proved, so far as matters of that kind can be proved, that it was written during the reign of the Emperor Julian.† Hence it must have been composed much about the same period as that during which flourished Cyril of Jerusalem.

In this dialogue, the speakers are Triephon and Critias: the former a Christian, the latter a Pagan. Critias, playing the buffoon, amuses himself with assuming the character of a catechumen; and, in that mock capacity, solicits instruction from Triephon. The wretched humour of the piece consists in the circumstance of the *simulated* catechumen's *real* paganism perpetually, and as it were unguardedly, betraying itself. Critias, at length, swears by Jupiter; and this is the moment, which Triephon is made to select for the purpose of initiating him into the grand secret of the Christian mysteries.

What then is the secret now revealed? Does the mode of its communication favour the opinion of the

* See Justin. Apol. i. vulg. ii. p. 43. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 198. Athenag. Legat. § ix. xi. xxii. p. 37, 38, 41, 96. Tertull. Apol. adv. Gent. p. 850. Tertull. adv. Prax. p. 405, 406. Melit. Apol. apud Chron. Pasch. in A.D. 164, 165. Clem. Alex. Protrep. p. 5, 6, 66, 68. Origen. adv. Cels. lib. iii. p. 135, lib. iv. p. 169, 170. Arnob. adv. Gent. lib. i. p. 23, 24. Minuc. Fel. Octav. p. 280, 281, 284. Lucian. de Mort. Peregrin. Oper. vol. iii. p. 333, 334, 337, 338.

† See Gesner. Disput. de Ætat. et Auctor. Philop. in Oper. Lucian. ad calc. vol. iii. Reitz. Amstel. 1743.

bishop of Aire; or does it support the opinion, which I have been led to advocate? The secret is unfolded by Triephon the catechist in the manner following:—

“The lofty, the great, the immortal, the celestial God: the Son of the Father; the Spirit proceeding from the Father: one from three, and three from one: Deem these things Jove: reckon this to be God.”*

3. I have now shown, in opposition to the bishop of Aire, that the doctrine of transubstantiation was neither the *exclusive* secret, nor even the *principal* secret, of the ancient christian mysteries; and, to that precise extent; therefore, I have invalidated his very ingenious theory. Still, however, it may be urged by his lordship, that, although neither the *exclusive* secret nor the *principal* secret, it was, at any rate, an *eminent* secret of the mysteries: and, in proof of such an opinion, he may adduce the language of that very Cyril, whose lectures I have specially employed for the purpose of demonstrating that the *grand* secret was the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

Cyril, it may be argued by the bishop, devotes two of his mystagogical lectures to the doctrine of the Eucharist; and, in those very lectures, he propounds to the initiated, most clearly and most distinctly, as an *eminent* secret of the mysteries, the dogma of transubstantiation.

“The bread which we behold,” says he, “though to the taste it be bread, is yet not bread, but the body of Christ: and the wine, which we behold, though to the taste it be wine, is yet not wine, but the blood of Christ.”†

Here, then, it may be urged on the authority of the catechist Cyril himself, the doctrine of transubstantiation is unreservedly set forth to the baptized mystæ, as *one* of the grand secrets preserved and handed

* Philop. in Oper. Lucian. vol. iii. Reitz. Amstel. 1743.

† Cyril. Catech. Mystag. iv. p. 238, 239.

down from the beginning by the arcane discipline of the church.

This, I apprehend, when divested of its various inaccuracies, is the best and most plausible form, under which the theory of the bishop can be exhibited: and, as I wish not to take any unfair advantage, I have myself very honestly, in the present statement, given his theory every possible chance of success.

I shall now, therefore, finally proceed to show, that, as the doctrine of transubstantiation was neither the *exclusive* nor the *principal* secret of the mysteries; so, notwithstanding the apparently decisive language of Cyril, it was not taught *at all* in the mysteries, even under the form of the very *smallest* and *least important* secret.

A doctrine, which *existed not* in the early church, assuredly could not be *taught* by the secret discipline of that church. Now it can be shown from evidence, both christian and pagan, that the doctrine of transubstantiation *existed not* in the church of the first ages. Therefore, a doctrine, thus circumstanced, could not possibly have been *a secret* of the mysteries.

(1.) On the subject of christian evidence, I have already been so copious, that this branch of my argument is completely anticipated.

Fully supported by the authority of Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Augustine, Gelasius, Facundus, the ancient homilist in Jerome, and even Cyril of Jerusalem himself, I have stated, that the church of at least the five first centuries recognised no change save a *moral* change in the consecrated elements; that she expressly denied our participation of the *literal* body and blood of Christ, and that she esteemed the bread and wine to be only *types* or *figures* or *symbols* or *images* of those awful realities which they were employed to represent.*

* See above, Book i. chap. 4. § II.

Such being the case, the doctrine of transubstantiation could have had no *existence* in the church of the five first centuries: and, if it *existed* not, it clearly could not have been made, in any, even the smallest degree, the *subject* of the mysteries.

(2.) From christian evidence, then, I may be allowed, without further repetition, to pass to the consideration of pagan evidence. This latter evidence is of a nature so remarkably strong, that, even alone, it is amply sufficient to decide the question. Through its instrumentality, we may demonstrate, beyond the possibility of confutation, that the doctrine now before us was *totally unknown* to the church of the first ages: whence, of course, it will inevitably follow, that it never could have been a *secret* of the ancient mysteries.

Every person, moderately versed in the documents of antiquity, is well aware, that the pagans again and again pleased themselves with ridiculing the well-known christian worship of the Saviour as God: and, in the dialogue *Philopatris*, we find them similarly scoffing at the catholic doctrine of the trinity.* Such ridicule proves *the existence* of those doctrines in the primitive church: and, by a parity of reasoning, if they had scoffed at the doctrine of transubstantiation, they would equally have established *the existence* of that doctrine. But, so far as I know, they NEVER deride the doctrine of transubstantiation. Yet, had that doctrine formed one of the secrets of the mysteries, they must, in all human probability, have come to the knowledge of it; for we find demonstratively, that they were not ignorant even of the grand and palmary secret: and, had they *known* the doctrine

* "Thou art teaching me arithmetic," says Critias, when the secret of the mysteries is imparted to him: "thy oath is purely arithmetical: verily, in the science of numeration, thou rivalest Nicomachus the Gerasenian. I know not what thou art saying. One, three; three, one! Certainly thou art dealing with the tetractys, or the ogdoad, or the triad of Pythagoras."

of transubstantiation, we cannot doubt that it would have similarly experienced their *ridicule*. But they never even so much as *mention* it. From their very silence, therefore, we may learn, that in the early church no such doctrine *existed*.

It may be said, that the pagans might possibly have learned the doctrines of Christ's godhead and the trinity, and yet that they very possibly might not have learned the doctrine of transubstantiation: for it does not follow, that, because they had learned *some* of the secrets of the mysteries, they must, therefore, have learned them *all*. Hence the argument from their silence is defective in conclusiveness.

Be it so: but my argument does not stop short at *this* point; nor, had such been the case, should I have ventured to describe it as *incapable of confutation*. I can produce the negative evidence of a pagan, who flourished in the middle of the fourth century, who delights to ridicule *all* the peculiar doctrines of christianity, who *MUST* have been acquainted with the doctrine of transubstantiation, had it then *existed*; who certainly would have scoffed at it if he *had* been acquainted with it, and who yet *never once mentions* it, or even so much as *alludes* to its very existence.

The pagan, whom I thus characterize, and whom I summon as an unexceptionable witness, is the Emperor Julian.

That extraordinary man was once, in profession at least, a christian: but, hating the light of the gospel, he apostatized to paganism. Now Julian, be it carefully observed, had been, not merely *an uninitiated catechumen*, but a *BAPTIZED christian*.* As a *baptized* christian, he must have heard the preparatory lectures of the catechist: as a *baptized* christian, he

* Sozomen. Eccles. Hist. lib. v. c. 2. According to Sozomen, Julian attempted to wash out his mark of baptism with the blood of victims sacrificed to the averruncan demons. The fact of his *baptism* is sufficient for my argument.

must, according to the discipline of the church, have been regularly initiated into the mysteries. If, then, as the bishop contends, transubstantiation were the secret doctrine most especially *taught* in the mysteries, Julian must have been well acquainted with the *existence* of that doctrine: and, if acquainted with its *existence*, a man of his humour would not have failed to make it the subject of his bitter *ridicule*.

How then stands the case with the imperial apostate, who, having been baptized, had indisputably been initiated into *all* the secrets of the mysteries?

In the work against christianity, which has been substantially preserved, and which has been regularly answered by Cyril of Alexandria, Julian ridicules the adoration of Christ; the godhead of Christ; the birth of Christ from the Virgin; the conception of Christ by the Holy Ghost; the doctrine, that Christ was the creator of the universe; the doctrine, that Christ is the Word of God, the Son of God, God from God of the substance of his Father; the doctrine of the trinity, which is the basis of the doctrine of Christ's godhead: he amuses himself likewise with what he deems the incurable absurdity of the purification of sin by the mere element of water in baptism: and, approximating to the very subject of transubstantiation, if any such doctrine had been then held in the church, he laughs at the Galileans for saying, that Christ had *once* been sacrificed on their behalf, and that, consequently, they themselves offered *no* sacrifices. But yet *NEVER*, on any occasion, or by any accident, though eagerly bent upon catching at everything in christianity which he might turn to derision, does he *mention*, or even so much as remotely *allude* to, the Latin doctrine of transubstantiation.*

Exactly the same remark applies to Julian's other

* See Cyril. Alex. cont. Julian. lib. v. p. 159. lib. vi. p. 191, 213. lib. viii. p. 253, 261, 262, 276. lib. ix. p. 290, 291, 314. lib. x. p. 327, 333. Ibid. lib. vii. p. 245. Ibid. lib. ix. p. 305, 306. lib. x. p. 354. Lipsæz, A. D. 1696.

works. Again and again he ridicules the Galileans, their agapæ and ministrations at tables, their base superstition, their acknowledgment of Christ's godhead: Moses also, and the prophets come in for a due share of his vituperation: Athanasius is reviled as the enemy of the gods, and as the artful inveigler of noble women to receive the sacrament of baptism: and, through the side of the first christian Emperor Constantine, the gospel is vilified, as encouraging universal profligacy and dishonesty and licentiousness, by its doctrine of cheaply purifying ablution and free pardon on condition of repentance. Yet NEVER does the emperor even once please himself, either by *ridiculing*, or by *simply noticing*, that doctrine which the bishop of Aire maintains to be the grand and exclusive secret of the ancient mysteries.*

I may be mistaken in estimating the strength of this argument: but it strikes upon my own apprehension, as being perfectly irresistible.

Let any reasonable being consider the *complete* knowledge which the *baptized* apostate possessed of the doctrines of christianity, his utter hatred of the gospel, his perpetual recurrence to the detested Galileans and their more detested theology, his humour of turning into ridicule whatever in christianity he thought capable of being made ridiculous: let any reasonable being consider these several matters; and then let him judge, whether, if transubstantiation had been a doctrine of the early catholic church, it could possibly have been *passed over in total silence* by such a man as Julian.

The complete taciturnity of the profane emperor, in everything that regards the doctrine of transub-

* See Julian. Imper. Oper. Orat. vi. p. 192. Orat. Fragment. p. 305. Misopog. p. 363. Epist. vii. p. 376. Epist. xlii. p. 423, 424. Epist. xlix. 429—431. Epist. li. p. 432—435. Epist. lii. p. 435—438. Epist. lxii. p. 450. Epist. lxiii. p. 453, 454. Ibid. Orat. Fragment. p. 289, 295. Ibid. Epist. vi. p. 376. Epist. xxvi. p. 398. Epist. li. p. 432, 435. Ibid. Cæsar. p. 336. Lips. A. D. 1696.

stantiation, is, I think, as complete a negative proof of its non-existence in the fourth century, as can be either desired, or imagined. Repeatedly does he scoff at all the peculiar doctrines of christianity: but he NEVER ridicules the Latin dogma of transubstantiation.

II. As I have now sufficiently shewn the total erroneousness of the bishop's theory, I might here be well permitted to conclude. Since, however, by way of establishing his speculation respecting the object of the ancient secret discipline, he claims to bring an argument from a recorded *fact*, I am unwilling to close the present subject without paying all due attention to that argument.

It is well known, that the pagans, from a very early period, were accustomed to charge the christians, sometimes with devouring the flesh and drinking the blood of a slaughtered man, and sometimes with first murdering and then feasting upon the mangled limbs of a young child.

This is the *fact*, on which the bishop would frame an argument in favour of his system; and the argument itself is to the following purport:

From the very first, christians were accused of celebrating a Thyestean banquet in their accursed mysteries. To elicit the truth, they were frequently and violently tortured. Invariably, however, they denied the charge. Now, if they had esteemed the elements in the Eucharist purely symbolical, why did they not give an explanation of the matter, which would at once have liberated them from torture? Yet, in no recorded instance, did they give any such exposition. Therefore they must consciously have held the doctrine of transubstantiation.

I have given the bishop's argument with as much strength and compactness as I am able: and, after weighing it with all care and attention, it strikes me as being so very paradoxical, that I marvel at its adop-

tion by a man possessing the acuteness of the respected prelate of Aire.

From his lordship's premises, according to my own notions of accurate reasoning, I should have been brought to a *directly opposite* conclusion. The recorded *fact* I should have deemed utterly *fatal* to his system: and, purposing *myself* to bring it forward *against* him when a convenient opportunity should offer, I was not a little surprised, as I advanced in the perusal of his work, to find, that he had *anticipated* me, and that he had preoccupied as *his* ground what I had innocently supposed to be *mine*. Had not the bishop thus got the start of me, I had intended to argue as follows:—

Through a recorded misapprehension of the true nature of the Eucharist, the pagans fancied, that the early christians *literally* devoured human flesh and *literally* drank human blood. To procure a confession of this enormity, they applied the torture: but the christians invariably *denied* the existence of any such abomination in their religious ceremony. Now they could not *with truth* have *denied* its existence, if they had *held* the doctrine of transubstantiation: for, in *that* case, they must have been conscious, that, according to their full knowledge and belief, they were in the constant habit of *literally* devouring human flesh and of *literally* drinking human blood. Yet, under the most severe torments, they invariably and totally *denied* the fact. Therefore, by denying the fact, they of necessity denied also the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Such, had I not been anticipated by the bishop, was my intended argument: and, as its basis was that identical fragment of Irenæus, to which his lordship has referred less amply than I could have wished, I shall subjoin the fragment itself, as it has been preserved to us by Ecumenius. The fact, as the bishop justly observes, took place during the persecution at Lyons in the year 177.

“The pagans, wishing to ascertain the secret ceremonial of the christians, apprehended their slaves, and put them to the torture. Impatient of the pain, and having nothing to tell which might please their tormentors, the slaves, who had heard their masters say that the Eucharist was the body and blood of Christ, forthwith communicated this circumstance. Whereupon the tormentors, fancying that it was literal blood and flesh which was served up in the mysteries of the christians, hastened to inform the other pagans. These immediately apprehended the martyrs, Sanctus and Blandina: and endeavoured to extort from them a confession of the deed. But Blandina, readily and boldly answered, How can those, who through piety abstain even from lawful food, be capable of perpetrating the actions which you allege against them?”*

Now, after a full and impartial consideration of this passage, I am compelled to conclude and to reason from it as follows:—

The pagans, misapprehending the testimony of the

* Iren. Fragment. apud Œcum. in 1 Pet. ii. 12. A further account of these matters is given in the epistle from the churches of Vienne and Lyons to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, as preserved by Eusebius. The same *accusation* is made against the christians; and the same explicit *denial* is given, not only by Sanctus and Blandina, but by ALL the faithful. According to the statement given in this epistle, Blandina was a christian slave of a christian mistress, while Sanctus was a deacon of the church of Vienne. The latter, therefore, as an ecclesiastic, must certainly have well known the real doctrine of the Eucharist. With these the epistle mentions Epagathus a youthful believer, Maturus a recently-baptized mysta, Attalus the very column and basis of the church, Byblis a christian woman, Ponticus a boy of fifteen years, and the venerable bishop Pothinus, stooping under the burden of more than nine decades. Young and old, male and female, bond and free, ecclesiastic and laic, they all equally *denied* the participation of literal human flesh and literal human blood in the celebration of the Eucharist. Under such circumstances, by what imaginable possibility they could all have been transubstantialists, exceeds my powers of comprehension. See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 1.

slaves, charged the christians with *literally* eating the flesh and with *literally* drinking the blood of a man *whenever* they celebrated the Eucharist. But the christians flatly *denied* the existence of any such practice. Therefore, if the christians *denied* the practice, when thus, *in avowed connexion with their celebration of the Eucharist*, explicitly charged upon them, they must, to all intents and purposes, have *denied* the doctrine of transubstantiation.

The bishop however contends, that, had the christians of Lyons deemed the elements to be only *symbols*, they would readily have freed themselves from the torture by giving to their persecutors this easy explanation of the charge brought against them. But no such explanation did they give. Therefore they virtually acknowledged the justice of the charge, in so far as the Eucharist was concerned.

I wonder to see so able a man argue, in every point of view, with such utter inconclusiveness. In the first place, the charge of eating *literal* human flesh and of drinking *literal* human blood in the celebration of the Eucharist was, as we have already found, constantly and explicitly *denied* by them: and, in the second place, it is difficult to conceive, under their circumstances, what possible benefit could have resulted from a formal explanation of their doctrine. They were tortured for the express purpose of forcing a confession, that, in the celebration of the Eucharist, they devoured *literal* human flesh and drank *literal* human blood. Now any such explanation, as the bishop would have us expect from them, would plainly amount to a *denial* of the charge; which *denial* they had *already* made in so many words: and it would be further attended only with the effect of making their persecutors view them in no better light than that of specious but dishonest equivocators. Where then would have been the utility of the required explanation? Torture was applied for the purpose of extorting a confession. The explanation

required by the bishop, would have been considered by the pagans as an equivocating denial. And, according to the avowed philosophy of the rack, confession not having been extorted, the torture would have been continued or increased. Where then, I may again ask, would have been the utility of the required explanation? The sum and substance of the account, given by Irenæus, is this. On the evidence of their slaves, who had heard their masters say that the Eucharist was the body and blood of Christ, the christians of Lyons were tortured in order to extort a confession, that they *literally* ate human flesh and *literally* drank human blood in the celebration of the eucharistic mysteries. Such, in form, was the charge brought against the christians. But this charge, even upon the rack, they uniformly and constantly and firmly *denied*.

From these unpromising materials, the bishop of Aire has constructed an argument, by which he undertakes to prove that the primitive christians certainly held the doctrine of transubstantiation.

CHAPTER VII.

Respecting the Latin Defence of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, from the Language of the ancient Liturgies, and from the Phraseology of the early Ecclesiastical Writers.

NOTHING can be more easy and simple, than the method of dealing with the ancient liturgies, and with the phraseology of the early ecclesiastical writers, which has been adopted by the bishop of Aire.*

The passages which speak of the consecrated elements being changed into the body and blood of Christ, he adduces with a copiousness which may well perplex an unsuspecting English laic. But not a single place does he cite, in which this change is declared to be purely *moral*, in which the elements are pronounced to be mere *symbols*, or in which we are explicitly told that we do *not* eat the literal body and that we do *not* drink the literal blood of our Saviour Christ. Respecting passages of this *latter* description, though they fully explain all passages of the *former* description, the bishop displays a prudent reserve. If produced, they would be fatal to his system. Hence his lordship, more judiciously than equitably, keeps them in the background.†

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. ix, x.

† The passages, suppressed by the bishop, I have already brought forward; and I desire nothing more, than that any English layman, who peruses his lordship's citations, will peruse also mine. See above, Book I. chap. 4. § ii.

I have said, and I say it with deep regret, that *the bishop has cautiously withheld from the eyes of his English correspondent those passages, which, if produced, would have given an effectual death-blow to his own speculations.* THE PASSAGES HAVE NOT BEEN PRODUCED BY HIS LORDSHIP. Yet he was too deeply learned in the fathers to be ignorant of their *existence*: and he was too skilful a polemic to venture upon the hazardous experiment of suppressing all *allusion* to them. What then was to be done? Instead of fairly producing at full length the identical passages themselves, so that the English laic might be able to form a just and accurate estimate of the litigated question, the bishop informs him, that in the early ecclesiastical writers there are indeed places, which a dexterous special pleader may turn to some little account: but, at the same time, he assures him, that, when those writers speak of the consecrated elements being *symbols* or *figures* of the body and blood of Christ, they mean no such thing as a careless or superficial observer might rashly fancy them to mean.

To establish this position, the bishop has adopted two distinct and certainly unconnected lines of argument.

I. He admits, that the consecrated elements are described by the early ecclesiastical writers, as being *figures* or *symbols* or *images* or *types* of the body and blood of Christ. This he admits: for, in good sooth, the denial of a *naked fact* was impossible. But then he assures the English laic, that the circumstance of their being *symbols* does not prevent the circumstance of their being also *realities*. Symbols, no doubt, they are of Christ's body and blood; but then, at the same time, they are *also* Christ's body and blood their own literal proper selves.

I have rarely met with a more singular experiment upon the presumed obtuse intellect of a simple laic,

than this which has been adventured by the learned bishop of Aire.

An acknowledged *symbol or image of a thing*, if we may credit a very able divine of the Latin church, may be at once both *a symbol of the thing in question*, and yet *the identical thing itself which it is employed to symbolize!*

By what new figure of rhetoric, or on what principle of plain common sense, the bishop reaches this paradoxical consummation, I presume not to conjecture. Assuredly, his proposed solution of the present difficulty overturns every notion, which we had previously been led to form respecting the nature of type and symbol, of metaphor and allegory.

The Serpent, says Horapollo, *was, among the Egyptians, a symbol of the world.** Hence, on the bishop's new rhetorical arrangement, the serpent is at once, both a symbol of the world, and the literal identical world which it symbolizes.

Hagar, as we learn from St. Paul, allegorically represented Mount Sinai in Arabia.† Therefore, if we adopt the bishop's principle, Hagar was not only a symbol of Mount Sinai, but the proper substantial Arabic mountain itself.

The consecrated wine, as we are assured by Clement of Alexandria, allegorically symbolizes the blood of Christ.‡ Hence, as the bishop maintains, the consecrated wine is at once, both the symbol of Christ's blood, and the identical literal blood which it symbolizes.§

* Horap. Hierog. lib. i. c. 2.

† Galat. iv. 24, 25.

‡ Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. ii. c. 2. p. 158.

§ The bishop of Meaux had already attempted to manage the stubborn fact, that the early fathers perpetually call the consecrated elements *types or signs or symbols or figures* of the body and blood of Christ: but he has so completely failed, that the bishop of Aire, probably on that account, neither refers to him nor adopts his line of argument.

By the Romanist, the point to be established is, that *the acknowledged sign or symbol of a thing* may not only be *the symbol of the*

II. To imagine, that a man of the bishop's superior attainments could *himself* admit such a tissue of rhetorical absurdities, whatever he might think of the less subtle intellect of his English correspondent, is perfectly out of the question. *Internally*, his

thing symbolized, but also that it may additionally be *the identical thing which it is employed to symbolize*. For, in the application of this extraordinary principle to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the ancient fathers compel him to allow, that *the consecrated elements are symbols of the body and blood of Christ*; and he himself contends, that they are likewise additionally *that identical body and blood of Christ which yet they are employed symbolically to represent*.

How then does the bishop of Meaux deal with a paradox, which apparently bids defiance to the whole system of rhetoric?

He tells us, that *the acknowledged existence of a sign or symbol by no means forbids the actual presence of the thing signified or symbolized*; and he illustrates this position by stating, that *the signs of life imply the actual presence of life*, and that *the temporary human forms assumed by angels imply the actual presence of the angels*. Hist. des Variat. livr. iv. § 11.

All this is perfectly true, but, unfortunately, it bears not in the slightest degree upon the paradox now before us.

The point, which the bishop had to establish, was, that *any given matter might be at once both the symbol of a thing and the thing symbolized*.

Now his illustrative argument plainly establishes no such incongruous position. Were I disposed to be severely precise, I might fairly say, that his lordship plays the sophist, and that he illegitimately tampers with the word *sign*. For, when the fathers speak of the consecrated elements being *signs* of Christ's body and blood, by the word *sign* they mean a *type* or *figure* or *symbol*: but, when the bishop speaks of a healthy pulse being a *sign* of life, or of a temporary human body being the *sign* of an angel's presence, he uses the word *sign*, not in the sense of a *symbol*, but in the sense of a *token* or *indication*. Let this, however, pass: let his lordship have the full benefit of his own sophistical illustration; and what follows? Has he established the position, which he undertook to establish? Nothing of the sort. A healthy pulse is a *sign* of life; but is not *identical* with the life which it indicates. The temporary bodies, assumed by angels, were *signs* of the presence of those angels; but the temporary bodies were not the angels themselves.

Thus, evidently, is the whole illustration of the bishop quite foreign to the assertion; that *the consecrated elements are, at once, both symbols of Christ's body and blood, and the identical body and blood of Christ which they are employed to symbolize*.

lordship no more admitted it, than I do; and, *externally*, he has in effect confessed this to be the case, by additionally adopting a totally *different* line of argument, the very principle of which inevitably *destroys* the principle of his last argument.

In the secret discipline of the early church, argues the bishop, the mystery of transubstantiation was communicated only to the faithful: while, with the most anxious jealousy, it was concealed alike from the pagans and the catechumens. Such being the case, we must not wonder to find the ancient ecclesiastical writers in two directly opposite stories. To the *mystæ*, they declare, without reserve, the grand secret of transubstantiation: to the pagans and to the catechumens, they propound the symbolical or allegorical nature of the consecrated elements; assuring them, that these elements are only types or figures or representations of the body and blood of Christ. By this contrivance, and at no greater expense than that of a direct falsehood, every thing continued as it ought to be. Pure unmingled truth attended upon the initiated: while, by a holy untruth, the profane curiosity of the pagan and the catechumen was effectually baffled.

1. What degree of obligation the fathers would feel to the bishop of Aire for this account of their theological dexterity, could those venerable men start out of their graves, it is not for me to estimate: I shall content myself with the much easier task of shewing, that his lordship's account of the matter is totally void of all foundation.

The great Augustine wrote *Enarrations*, intermingled with discourses, on all the hundred and fifty psalms of the ancient Hebrew church. Now the bishop of Aire, I presume, will not maintain, that these *Enarrations* were composed for the exclusive benefit of *pagans* and *catechumens*. Lest that, however, should turn out to be the case, I shall begin with demonstrating, that they *must* have been writ-

ten for the edification of the *baptized* or the *mystæ* or the *initiated*.

From Jerome and Origen and Cyril of Jerusalem we learn, that the high doctrines of Christ's godhead and the Holy Trinity were not revealed to the catechumens until the forty days which immediately preceded their baptism; when they passed, from the lower class of the junior catechumens, to the upper class of the competentes or illuminated.* Now Augustine's Enarrations on the Psalms explicitly and unreservedly set forth those high doctrines.† Therefore Augustine's Enarrations must have been written for the benefit of the *mystæ*, who had been initiated into all the arcane doctrines of the secret discipline, and who consequently must have well known the doctrine of transubstantiation, had it really been numbered among those arcane doctrines.

Augustine's Enarrations, then, were assuredly written for the benefit of the *mystæ*. Consequently, even on the bishop's own statement of the matter, we may be certain, that, whatever he says in his Enarrations respecting the Eucharist, is the true and unveiled doctrine of the early catholic church.

Now it is in these identical Enarrations, clearly written for the benefit of those who had been initiated into the mysteries, that Augustine not only calls the consecrated elements *the FIGURE of our Lord's body and blood*; but also unambiguously declares, that *in the Eucharist we do NOT eat and drink the literal body and blood of Christ, for the words of the Saviour in the institution of that sacrament are to be SPIRITUALLY understood*.‡

2. What then, it may be asked, is the meaning of those various strong passages, which the bishop has

* See above, Book I. chap. vi. § I. 2.

† August. Enart. in Psalm. xlv. vulg. xlv. Oper. vol. viii. p. 144, 145.

‡ August. Enarr. in Psalm. iii. Oper. vol. viii. p. 7. Enarr. in Psalm. xcvi. Oper. vol. viii. p. 397.

produced with such learned copiousness from the ancient liturgies and the early fathers?

The key to such passages is furnished by the fathers themselves; and I have already produced it with quite sufficient evidence. While Augustine tells us, that the consecrated elements are only the *figure* of Christ's body and blood; and while he assures us, that we do *not* eat the Lord's literal flesh, and that we do *not* drink the Lord's literal blood in the blessed Eucharist: the early ecclesiastical writers intimate, after a manner which cannot be mistaken, that the change in the consecrated elements, whereof they speak so repeatedly and so strongly, is a change, not *physical*, but *moral*.*

* See above, Book I. chap. iv. § II. 1, 2.

CHAPTER VIII.

Respecting the Rise and Progress, and Final Establishment of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

I HAVE shown that the early fathers, from the very necessity of the *illustrations* which they employ, could have recognized no change in the consecrated elements, save a *moral* change: I shall now show, that the same conclusion must inevitably be drawn from the nature and purport of their *arguments*; for they actually argue *against* the doctrine of a physical change, *in favour of* the doctrine of a moral change.

This very curious part of my subject I the rather take up, because it gives me an opportunity of briefly stating the rise and progress, and final establishment of the novelty denominated *transubstantiation*.

I. In the course of the fifth century, sprang up the heresy, which owed its birth to the fertile brain of Eutyches.

Availing himself of the language, which, though with abundant explanation of its *real* meaning, had been employed in the ancient liturgies and by the earlier fathers, this speculatist ingeniously contrived to make it the basis of the doctrine which he wished to introduce.

The language in question he chose to interpret, as it had never been previously understood, in the sense of its teaching the doctrine of a *physical* change in the consecrated elements. Whence, according to

Theodoret, his argument, in favour of the heresy from himself denominated *Eutychianism*, ran in manner following:—

*As the symbols of the Lord's body and blood are one thing, BEFORE their consecration by the priest; but, AFTER their consecration, are physically changed and become quite another thing: so the material body of the Lord, AFTER its assumption, was physically changed into the divine substance.**

Thus ran the argument of Eutyches, as placed by Theodoret in the mouth of Eranistes, an imaginary Eutychian speaker in one of his dialogues.

1. Now, against this same Eranistes, by way of exhibiting orthodoxy as orthodoxy stood in the fifth century, Theodoret brings an opponent, whom he characteristically denominates *Orthodoxus*. Eranistes propounds his argument, as I have given it above, built professedly on the alleged *physical* change in the consecrated elements: but *Orthodoxus* immediately demolishes it by an explicit denial of the premises on which it is founded.

"You are caught," says he, "in the net which you yourself have woven. *For the mystical symbols, after consecration, pass not out of their own nature: inasmuch as they still remain in their original substance and form and appearance; and they may be seen and touched, just as they were before consecration.* But they are understood to be what they become: and they are venerated, as being those things which they are believed to be. Compare, therefore, the *image* with the *archetype*; and you will perceive their resemblance: for the *type* must needs be similar to the *truth*."†

Such is the replication of *Orthodoxus*, propounded, as his very name implies, *on behalf of the orthodox catholic church of the fifth century*: and I wholly

* Theod. Dial. ii. Oper. vol. iv. p. 84. Lut. Paris, 1642.

† Theod. Dial. ii. p. 85.

mistake its purport, if, while Eutychianism is defended on the principle of a *physical* change in the consecrated elements, orthodoxy be not defended on the directly opposite principle of a *moral* change alone in the consecrated elements.

I am the less fearful of misapprehending the import of the rejoinder framed by Orthodoxus, because I find the doctrine of a *moral*, as contradistinguished from a *physical*, change, expressly maintained by the same speaker in yet another of Theodoret's dialogues.

"Jacob," says Orthodoxus, "called the blood of the Saviour the blood of the grape. For, if the Lord be denominated a vine, and if the fruit of the vine be called wine, and if from the side of the Lord fountains of blood and water circulating through the rest of his body passed to the lower parts; well and seasonably did the patriarch say, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. As we then call the mystic fruit of the vine, after its consecration, the blood of the Lord: so he called the blood of the true vine the blood of the grape.—Our Saviour, indeed, changed the names: for to his body he gave the name of the symbol, while to the symbol he gave the name of his blood; and, having called himself a vine, he thence consistently applied the appellation of his blood to the symbol.—But the scope of such language is perfectly familiar to those who have been initiated into the mysteries. For our Lord required, that they who partake of the divine mysteries should not regard the nature of the things which they see, but that in the change of names they should believe that change which is wrought by grace. Inasmuch as he, who called his own natural body wheat and bread, and who further bestowed upon himself the appellation of a vine: he also honoured the visible symbols with the name of his body and

‘blood, *not changing their nature, but adding grace to nature.*’*

The passage which I have here adduced is one of singular importance. In every point of view, it is fatal to the cause which the bishop of Aire has unhappily been led to espouse.

The bishop *denies* the homogeneousness of the two expressions, *I am the vine*, and *This is my blood*: whence he contends, that although the former ought to be interpreted figuratively, the latter ought doubtless to be interpreted literally.† But Orthodoxus, in the fifth century, positively *asserts* their homogeneousness: for he teaches us, that the reason, WHY Christ denominated the sacramental wine *his own blood*, was, because he had previously denominated himself *a vine*.

The bishop strenuously *maintains* the doctrine of a physical change in the consecrated elements. But Orthodoxus, even in so many words, *denies* it. Christ, says he, *did not change the nature of the elements*.

The bishop assures us, that the doctrine of a *physical* change was the grand secret of the mysteries. But Orthodoxus declares, that the language, which inculcates the doctrine of a *moral* change, is perfectly familiar to, and well understood by, all those who have been initiated.

2. In these latter days of unscriptural innovation, it is pleasing to behold a Roman pontiff, who flourished in the same century with Eutyches and Theodoret, adding the sanction of his voice to that primitive doctrine of a *moral* change, which, so far as I know, was first impugned by a convicted and acknowledged heretic. In the attack upon the then germinating speculation of Eutychianism, Gelasius of Rome joined himself to Theodoret of Cyrus: and, as he had to oppose the

* Theod. Dial. i. Oper. vol. iv. p. 17, 18.

† Discuss. Amic. vol. i. p. 295.

self-same specious argument built upon the alleged circumstance of a *physical* change, he wisely opposed it with the self-same weapons.

"Certainly," says he, "the sacraments of the body and blood of the Lord, which we receive, are a divine thing: because by these we are made partakers of the divine nature. Nevertheless, *the substance or nature of the bread and wine ceases not to exist*: and, assuredly, the image and similitude of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in the action of the mysteries."*

Here again we may observe, that Gelasius, while he speaks of the elements being the *image* and *similitude* of Christ's body and blood, expressly denies the doctrine of any *physical* change. "The *substance or nature* of the bread and wine," says he, "ceases not to exist."

3. Unhappily, the sound declarations of Theodoret's Orthodoxus, though supported by all the authority of Pope Gelasius, do not seem to have had any effect on the Eutychians. They still retained their novel doctrine of a *physical* change; and they still employed it as an argument to demonstrate the *physical* change of our Lord's material body into the substance of the godhead. Hence, about the middle of the sixth century, Ephrem of Antioch was compelled to resume the weapons of Theodoret and Gelasius.

"No man of common sense," he observes, "will assert, that the *nature* of things palpable and impalpable, visible and invisible, is the same. Thus *the body of Christ, which is received by the faithful, does not depart from its own sensible substance*, though, by virtue of consecration, it is united to a spiritual grace: and thus baptism, though a spiritual thing itself, yet preserves the

* Gelas. de duab. Christ. Natur. cont. Nestor. et Eutych. in Biblioth. Patr. vol. iv. p. 422.

‘water which is the property of its sensible substance; it loses not what it was before.’”*

The same doctrine of a *moral* change only in the elements, and the same strenuous opposition to the novel Eutychian doctrine of a *physical* change, prevailed, we see, in the time of Ephrem, as well as in the time of Theodoret and Gelasius. Ephrem, on the true principle of analogical homogeneity, brings the two holy sacraments into immediate comparative juxtaposition. The symbols of bread and wine, he argues, are no more *physically* changed into the body and blood of Christ, than the symbol of water is *physically* changed into the inward moral grace of baptism. In neither case do the material elements depart from their own sensible substance or nature. They are severally *united*, indeed, by virtue of consecration, to a spiritual grace; but the spiritual grace is *superadded* to the material symbols. As for the symbols themselves, they experience no *physical* change. The bread and wine, in the one sacrament, still *remain* bread and wine: just as the water, in the other sacrament, still *remains* water.

II. From this determined opposition at its commencement, we might well have imagined, that the doctrine of a *physical* change could never have established itself in any branch of the catholic church: but the event has demonstrated the possibility of the fact.

Although the doctrine of a *physical* change was first started by a heretic, and although it was strenuously opposed by a Roman pontiff, it gradually worked its way into ecclesiastical favour. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the doctrine of *Eutyches*, in regard to a *physical* change, was condemned as heretical: but, in the year 787, having now attained the respectable antiquity of about three hundred years, it was decreed to be orthodox by the fathers

* Ephrem. Antioch. cont. Eutych. apud Phot. Cod. 229.

of the second Council of Nice. Reversing the decision of the seventh Ecumenical Council, that *the only legitimate image or representation of Christ was the consecrated bread and wine in the Eucharist*; reversing this decision of their predecessors, who met at Constantinople in the year 754, and denying to their synod the very name of a council, for no better reason than because they themselves differed from it in opinion, the fathers of the second Nicene Council pronounced, that the Eucharist is not the *mere image* of Christ's body and blood, but that it is Christ's body and blood their own *literal and proper and physical* selves.*

III. Still, however, though at length sanctioned by a council, the doctrine was in a rude and indigested state: it had received many severe blows, during its rugged infancy, from Theodoret and Pope Gelasius; and it had with difficulty passed through the period of a sickly and precarious childhood, branded with the impress of heresy, and disowned alike by the West and by the East.

A brighter day, however, was now beginning to dawn upon it. An ecumenical council, though at the expense of contradicting another council, had recognised the orthodoxy of its *general* principle: but to Paschase of Corby, in the ninth century, must justly be ascribed the honour of having first reduced it into a compact and well-arranged system. If not, in absolute strictness of speech, its original parent, he may certainly vindicate to himself the praise of having been its careful and tender foster-father. *Paschase*, says Cardinal Bellarmine, *was the first who wrote seriously and copiously concerning the truth of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist.*†

* I cannot understand the words of the council in any other sense: and, of course, every Romanist will agree with me.—See Concil. Nicen. secund. act. vi. Labb. Concil. Sacros. vol. vii. p. 448, 449.

† Bellarm. de Scriptor. Eccles.

IV. Such was the gradual progress of the tenet, from its first invention by Eutyches, to its final completion by Paschase. Nevertheless, many years elapsed, before the church of Rome ventured to impress upon it, in its matured state, the seal of indisputable verity and the obligation of universal belief.

In the year 1079, indeed, Pope Gregory the Seventh, in a synod then assembled at Rome, compelled Berenger, who had opposed the Eutychian novelty, to acknowledge, that the bread and wine, placed upon the altar, are substantially and physically changed into the true, and proper, and literal flesh and blood of Christ by virtue of the prayer of consecration. But it was not until the fourth council of Lateran, in the year 1215, that Pope Innocent the Third finally enjoined and imposed upon the whole body of the faithful, as a necessary article of Christian faith, the present doctrine of transubstantiation.*

V. It is worthy of note, that, as Theodoret and Pope Gelasius opposed the doctrine of a *physical* change, when it was first started by Eutyches; so Raban Maurus, archbishop of Mentz, equally opposed it, when it was revived and digested by Paschase of Corby.

"*Some persons, of late,*" says that prelate, "not entertaining a sound opinion respecting the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, have actually ventured to declare, that this is the identical body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; the identical body to wit, which was born of the Virgin Mary, in which Christ suffered upon the cross, and in which he rose from the dead. *This error we have opposed with all our might.*"†

* *Before the fourth Lateran Council*, says Tonsal of Durham, *men were at liberty as to the manner of Christ's presence in the sacrament.*—Tonsal. de Euchar. lib. i. p. 146.

† Raban. Maur. Epist. ad Heribald. c. xxxiii. The bishop of Aire makes a very singular mistake in roundly asserting, that the

The language of the archbishop is very remarkable in three several points of view.

doctrine of transubstantiation was, *for the first time*, directly attacked by Berenger in the *eleventh century*.—Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 120. His lordship does not seem to have been aware of the zealous opposition made to this identical doctrine, in the *ninth century*, by Raban of Mentz, and many other assertors of what, until my evidence be set aside, I shall venture to call *the old faith*.

On the disagreements among Luther and Calvin and Zuingle respecting the doctrine of the Eucharist, the bishop is superfluously copious.

I see nothing extraordinary in the fact, that, when men first open their eyes from a deep slumber, their vision should for a season be defective in clearness. Be this, however, as it may, we of the Anglican church are no way bound to answer for the differences of the continental reformers. We are neither Lutherans, nor Calvinists, nor Zuinglians: *we have received our appellation, as Chrysostom speaks* (Homil. xxxiii. in Act. Apost. xv. Oper. vol. viii. p. 680.), *from the faith itself*: we are catholics of the Anglican church, no less than the bishop of Aire is a catholic of the Gallican church. Certainly we honour both Luther and Calvin and Zuingle for their works' sake: but the bishop greatly errs, if he imagines that we erect any one of them into our spiritual master.

Yet, though I feel myself no way pledged to act as an umpire between these three eminent foreigners, I cannot quite so readily pass over the attack, which the bishop of Aire has made upon one of our own most venerable English prelates.

On the authority of Smith, bishop of Chalcedon, his lordship informs us, that Bishop Jewel charged his chaplain to publish to the world after his death, that *all which he had written against the Romish doctrine had been written against his conscience and the truth*, and that *he had thus acted purely to pay his court to the queen, and to prop up the religion which she had introduced*.—Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 135.

Thus condescends the respectable bishop of Aire to calumniate an English prelate on the testimony of a man, who published his pretended facts, not in the reign of Elizabeth, and in England; but in the year 1654, and at Paris; thus condescends the bishop to mislead an English layman, forgetting, or ignorant, that this very Jewel, *before the accession of Elizabeth*, and *during the reign of her sister*, had been ejected from all his preferment for his stout adherence to the primitive catholic faith, and had himself escaped the flames only by a timely flight to the continent.

Jewel is not the only English divine whom the bishop has undertaken to misrepresent. He further claims, as favourable to

Without the slightest hesitation, he pronounces the doctrine to be AN ERROR, which he himself was strenuously opposing: by the use of the word *SOME*, he clearly testifies, as *a naked matter of fact*, that, in his time, the doctrine was held only by a few adventurous admirers of Paschase: and, by the expression OF LATE, he no less clearly indicates, also as *a naked matter of fact*, that the doctrine, though its outlines might have been traced by Eutyches, and recognised by the second Nicene Council, was, in the ninth century, resisted as a palpable innovation.*

the doctrine of transubstantiation, Forbes and Thorndike, and Montague and Parker.—Discuss. Amic. vol. i. p. 333—336.

Bishop Forbes merely says, what I have myself said, that he would not undertake to pronounce the doctrine of transubstantiation *an impossible absurdity*: and as for Thorndike, Montague, and Parker, they simply maintain, what the church of England has ever maintained, *a change produced in the elements by virtue of consecration*. For this doctrine they refer to the fathers; and, with good reason, do they thus refer. The fathers, like themselves, held the doctrine of *a change* indeed: but that change was a *moral*, not a *physical* one.

Such controversial stratagems, in a work professedly addressed to the English *laity*, are unworthy of the bishop of Aire. His lordship must surely have known, that the divines of the Anglican church hold the doctrines of *a real presence*, and of *a change in the consecrated elements*, after a totally different manner from the divines of the Latin church. A *layman*, however, not conversant in these topics, might easily be perplexed by his statement.

* The bishop of Meaux roundly asserts, that, both in the East and in the West, the doctrine of transubstantiation was unanimously adopted from the words of our Lord, without causing the least trouble or opposition: and he adds, that those who believed it were never marked by the church as innovators.—Hist. des Variat. livr. ii. § 36.

Greatly did I marvel when I read this extraordinary passage. Is it possible, then, that the mass of evidence *to the direct contrary*, which I have now produced, can have been utterly unknown to such a man as the learned Bossuet? Is it possible that he can have been ignorant, that Pope Gelasius in the West, and Theodoret of Cyrus in the East, synchronically, and with one accord, opposed the new doctrine of a *physical* change in the consecrated elements, when it was first started by the Eutychians in the fifth century? Is it possible, that these and the other facts which I have brought forward, can never have come within the cognizance of this very

Raban of Mentz, as we might well expect, was not the only opponent of the Paschasian novelty. It was equally impugned by Heribald of Auxerre, Amalar of Triers, Bertram of Corby, Walafrid Strabo, Christian Druthmar, Drepanius Florus, and John Scot Erigena.

able and acute Latin prelate? To omit what a Romanist would deem the inferior authorities of Theodoret and Ephrem and Fa-cundus and Raban of Mentz, a direct censure upon the palpable novelty of a *physical* change was specially pronounced by *the pre-siding pope himself*. Gelasius, the lawful head of the universal church for the time being, expressly declared, with the full concurrence of that church, and even in *controversial opposition* to the then new dogma of a *physical* change, that *the substance or nature of the bread and wine ceases not to exist*. Yet does the bishop of Meaux fearlessly assert, that the doctrine of transubstantiation was unanimously adopted, both in the East and in the West, without causing the least trouble: yet does he intrepidly pronounce, that those who believed it were never marked by the church as innovators upon primitive antiquity!

CHAPTER IX.

The Difficulties of Romanism in respect to Auricular Confession, as imposed and enforced by the Church of Rome.

AURICULAR confession to a priest the church of England *allows*, and in some cases *recommends*: the church of Rome not only *allows* and *recommends* it; but, also, as a matter of strict religious obligation, *imposes* and *enforces* it.

Such being the case, if the bishop of Aire wish to convict the Anglican church of error, it will be his business to shew, that auricular confession to a priest is, not merely *a point of option*, but *a point of strict religious duty and absolute necessary obligation*. Accordingly, his lordship undertakes to perform this task, partly from Scripture, and partly from the practice of ecclesiastical antiquity.*

I. To discover in Scripture any explicit command either of Christ or of his apostles, that we should regularly make auricular confession to a priest, was a thing altogether impracticable. The bishop, therefore, does not attempt it. Yet, what cannot be proved explicitly, may be proved, he thinks, inductively.

1. "The power of the keys, or the right of absolution and retention," he argues, "has been given by Christ to his apostles and to their lawfully con-

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xi.

‘secrated successors.* But this power cannot be effectively exercised without auricular confession. *Therefore*, by a necessary consequence from Holy Scripture, the religious obligation of auricular confession has been demonstrated.”

Of this syllogism I am willing to allow the conclusiveness, whensoever the bishop shall have proved, that *the power of the keys cannot be effectively exercised without auricular confession as practised in the church of Rome.*

That important point he labours, no doubt, to prove; because he is conscious, that, without such proof, his syllogism is invalid. But, even upon *his own* principle of the power of the keys, as that power is interpreted by *himself*, he has laboured ineffectually.

The granting or the withholding of sacerdotal absolution, the bishop reasonably makes to depend upon the actual dispositions of the sinner.† Hence the question is, *How these actual dispositions are to be ascertained?*

Now, as the bishop truly remarks, spiritual judges can no more read the thoughts and hearts of sinners, than any other persons. What then is to be done in order to a just absolution or retention?

The bishop says, that we must needs have auricular confession. For, without auricular confession, we cannot ascertain the actual dispositions of sinners: and, unless the actual dispositions of sinners be ascertained, the granting or the withholding of sacerdotal absolution cannot be rightly and effectually exercised.

Such, in full, is his lordship’s argument from Scripture. The point, wherein it fails, is the defect of proof, that *we cannot ascertain the actual dispositions of sinners without auricular confession.*

* Mat. xviii. 18. John xx. 21—23.

† Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 144.

2. There is a fallacy in the terms employed by the bishop, which may very possibly have escaped even himself. He speaks of *auricular confession* ; but he does not define what he means by the phrase. Yet, to the validity of his argument, an accurate definition is of the first importance.

Auricular confession simply means *confession into the ear of a priest*. But such confession may be either *general* or *particular*.

That the auricular confession, defended by the bishop, is *particular* auricular confession, cannot be doubted ; for *this* is the species of confession imposed and enforced by the church of Rome. In his argument, however, we hear nothing of *particular* confession. Had confession been *thus* defined, the utter inconclusiveness of his reasoning would immediately have appeared : for, in truth, a particular confession of sins is no way necessary for the ascertaining of the actual dispositions of sinners. This will sufficiently appear from the following brief comparative statement :—

On the one hand, then, a man may *duly* and *exactly* confess ALL his sins to a priest, without any concealment or extenuation ; and he may express the utmost degree of sorrow for what he has done, with full purposes of amendment. Yet, in the actual dispositions of his mind, he may be a mere superstitious hypocrite, who has unhappily taken up the delusive notion, that a priest, under *any* circumstances, must possess the absolute and unconditional power of conferring an irrecoverable absolution.

On the other hand, without a single specification *in detail*, a man may bitterly confess to his sacerdotal friend, that he has deeply sinned against God, that he has offended in numerous instances against his most holy laws, that his besetting sin weighs heavily upon his conscience. And all this he may do with such fervency and anguish of spirit, as to evince the true penitent, unto whom the remembrance of his

misdoings is grievous, and the burden of them is intolerable.

Here we have two cases of confession: the one, constructed upon the principle of the Latin church, which requires *confession in detail*; the other, constructed upon the principle of the English church, which demands *no confession of particulars* beyond what the penitent is willing to make of his own free accord.

Now the bishop's argument, if it would at all serve the cause which he has been led to espouse, must prove, that *we cannot ascertain the actual dispositions of sinners without hearing a particular and specific confession of ALL their sins*. But this it does NOT prove. For nothing can be more clear, than that those dispositions may be ascertained, so far as fallible man can ascertain them, just as well from a *general* confession of sinfulness, as from that *particular* confession of every distinct sin which the church of Rome requires in order to a just absolution.

II. Since the bishop has thus totally failed of proving, from Scripture, the religious obligation of auricular confession, as enforced and practised in the Latin church, I see not how it is possible to establish the point from any mere human ordinance. Yet, even if this were granted, which never can be granted, still the bishop will again be found to have totally failed on his own selected ground of ecclesiastical antiquity.

It will be recollected, that the dispute between his lordship and myself respects neither *the existence* nor *the lawfulness* of auricular confession, whether general or particular: our dispute simply respects its *alleged necessity* and *religious obligation* upon the conscience. Hence, in recurring to ecclesiastical antiquity, it was the business of the bishop to establish the *latter* point which is *denied*, not the *former* point which is *admitted*.

Now, to establish the *latter* point, the point with

which ALONE he was concerned; he has not brought even so much as the shadow of a proof.

1. His oldest evidence is the venerable testimony of the Roman Clement, the friend and fellow-labourer of St. Paul. I subjoin it, precisely as given by the bishop himself; and, if it prove the point which he has undertaken to establish, I acknowledge myself to be a vanquished disputant.

*So long as we continue in this world, says the holy Clement, let us repent sincerely of all the evil which we have committed in the flesh. For, when once we quit the world, no further opportunity is afforded us either of confession or of penitence.**

His next oldest evidence is Irenæus, who flourished chiefly during the latter half of the second century: for as his lordship produces not the testimony either of Polycarp or Ignatius or Justin, I conclude that no such testimony could be discovered.

To Irenæus I have carefully followed him, according to his own two references; but Irenæus says not a single syllable to his purpose.

In the first of the two passages, we have an account of an impostor named *Mark*, who seduced many silly women to join his party, and whose conduct was not remarkable for its correctness. The greater part of these women, having been at length happily reclaimed, confessed, that the impostor had strangely gained their affections, and that he had infamously abused the influence which he had acquired.†

From the second of the two passages we learn, that the heretic Cerdon, in his better days I suppose, often went to church and made confession: but, whether he confessed particularly to a priest, or whether he joined in a general liturgical confession of his sins to God, Irenæus does not inform us.‡

3. The bishop's next witness, as adduced in chron-

* Clem. Epist. ad Corinth. ii. § 8.

† Iren. adv. Hær. lib. i. c. 9.

‡ Ibid. lib. iii. c. 4.

ological order, is Tertullian ; who lived at the latter end of the second and at the beginning of the third century.

I have followed his lordship to Tertullian : but the testimony of that learned father strikes me as being rather adverse, than favourable, to his cause. Doubtless Tertullian speaks of confession revealing a crime, of confession being the counsel of satisfaction, of a penitent falling prostrate before the presbyters and altars of God, of a penitent bending low at the knees of his brethren, of the impossibility of concealing our sins from the Lord though we may hide them from men ; of all these several matters he doubtless speaks in a style somewhat verbose and declamatory : but then, in the very passage wherein he speaks of them, he describes confession as being made, not to *a priest*, but to *the Lord*.*

4. The bishop's most promising evidence, which therefore I have reserved to the last, is that of Socrates and Sozomen. But the matter, which they notice, even if we make the most of it, comes too late by about three hundred years : for a mere canon of the church, at the end of the fourth century, cannot religiously bind upon the conscience, what St. John, the last surviving apostle, by his silence left a matter of option at the end of the first century.

I have followed the bishop to both those ecclesiastical historians ; and small, I fear, is the emolument which his cause can derive from either of them.

The story, which they tell, is this. In the reign of Theodosius, aboutt he end of the fourth century, a canon of the church removed the presbyters, who had been wont *publicly* to hear the confessions of the penitent : for this discipline, which plainly enough originated from the public confessions of the lapsed ere they were readmitted into the bosom of the church, was found to be intolerable as an ordi-

* Tertull. de Pœnit. § ix. p. 483.

nary practice. In the room of these displaced presbyters, another canon enjoined, that in each city there should be appointed a certain discreet presbyter, to whom a secret might be safely entrusted, and who henceforth should hear confessions *privately*. For a short time, the new machine worked tolerably well; but an unhappy affair soon occurred at Constantinople, the particulars of which I think it no way necessary to detail. The culprit was, of course, immediately degraded; but the indignation of the people, not very reasonably, was directed against the whole body of the priesthood. Reasonably, however, or unreasonably, still, in matter of fact, it *was* so directed; and Nectarius, the archbishop or patriarch, was not a little perplexed what to do. In this emergency, the presbyter Eudemon gave him advice, which Socrates censures, but which Nectarius followed. The new plan of auricular confession to a priest was abolished; and each person was freely admitted to the holy communion, according as, in the presence of God, he judged himself to be in a fit state of preparation.*

Such is the joint narrative of Socrates and Sozomen. If it can at all further the bishop's object, I have no wish to deprive him of its full benefit.

5. But the bishop will say, that, although abolished in the East ere it had well commenced, the practice, by the very testimony of Sozomen himself, still prevailed in the western churches, and more especially in the Roman church.†

Certainly it did: but, so far as I can discern, this is no satisfactory proof of its *absolute necessity* and of its *religious obligation upon the conscience*; the matter, if I mistake not, which his lordship has undertaken to establish. Yet, even in Italy, for the disgraceful truth *must* be confessed, the new system

* Socrat. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 19. Sozomen. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. 16.

† Sozomen. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. 16.

was far from meeting with universal acceptance. Ambrose of Milan patronised it: but, as the bishop remarks, it is too true, that already, even in his time, some insensates, under a pretext since developed at the reformation, refused to submit to this ministration of the priests. Their refusal, it seems, was grounded upon a deference to the supreme majesty of God, who (as they imagined) could *alone* pardon sins; and, according to the bishop, they were fully confuted by Ambrose: but they do not appear to have been *themselves* convinced by that learned prelate's argument.* They conceived, I apprehend, that absolution, pronounced by a priest, was only conditional and declarative: conditional, as the bishop himself seems to admit; declarative, as the church of England additionally inclines to conjecture. Hence, if sacerdotal absolution could be procured only on the rack of auricular confession, they ventured to think, that the absolution of God, after such a confession to the Lord as Tertullian defines primitive

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 187. The bishop, I regret to observe, condescends to make, as it were, a Scriptural doctrine, that strange distinction between *repentance* and *doing penance*, which is one of the many unaccountable delights of the Latin church.

Repentance, he tells us, is the principle of the reformation: but this is not sufficient: we must also confess and do penance.

Now I beg to ask, Where is there a single passage in the whole New Testament, which enjoins the performance of a Latin penance as necessary to eternal salvation?

An uneducated Romanist will tell us, that penance is enjoined again and again in Holy Scripture; but the bishop of Aire is *not* an uneducated Romanist. *He* knows perfectly well, that the expressions *penance* and *to do penance*, which perpetually occur in the Romish versions of the New Testament, do not exhibit the true idea of the original words *μετάνοια* and *μετανοεῖν*. Those words, from the very necessity of their etymology, relate, not to the outward austerities which the Latin church enjoins under the name of *penance*, but purely and exclusively to that moral change of mind which we denominate *repentance*.

By this lamentable, and (I fear) systematic, mistranslation of the Greek original, thousands and millions may have been seduced into a scheme of mere unauthorized and mis-deemed meritorious will-worship.

confession to have been, might peradventure be equally beneficial and efficacious.*

* *Exomologesis* est, qua delictum *Domino* nostrum confitemur, non quidem ut ignaro; sed quatenus satisfactio confessione disponitur, confessione pœnitentia nascitur, pœnitentia Deus mitigatur.—Tertull. de Pœnit. § ix. p. 483.

CHAPTER X.

The Difficulties of Romanism in regard to the Doctrine of Satisfaction.

THE Romish doctrine of satisfaction is stated by the bishop of Aire in manner following:—

We are all sinful creatures; and we might justly have been devoted to endless punishment. But Christ laid down his life for us upon the cross; and, through the alone meritorious efficacy of his death and sufferings, we are exempted from the dreadful penalty of everlasting woe. Yet, although the Saviour, by the infinite value of his blood, *might* no doubt have delivered us both from eternal punishment and from transitory punishment; *in matter of fact*, it has pleased him to deliver us only from the former. The latter, as justly due to our sins, he has left us still to undergo. Whence, consequently, we must undergo it, either in the present world, or in the next world, or jointly in both worlds. Now the undergoing of this transitory punishment is what the Latin church denominates *a making of satisfaction to the justice of God*.*

The moral efficacy, then, of Christ's death, so far as I can understand the bishop's statement, may be thus briefly specified. *Our Lord's meritorious passion on the cross delivers us, indeed, from the eternal punishment of sin: but it does not avail to deliver us from its temporal punishment.*

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xii.

I. I wish that his lordship had been a little more explicit, in defining the precise idea which he would attach to the word *satisfaction*. Had he done that, some degree of trouble might have been saved.

If, by the word *satisfaction*, he means only to describe *an undoubted fact, which presents itself daily before our eyes*; certainly the most hardy disputant would not incline to controvert his statement.

In the course of God's moral government, as we all know, effect is so suspended upon cause, that vice perpetually receives a temporal punishment. The deepest repentance and the most exalted piety of later life will not restore a constitution destroyed by early depravity. Pardon, indeed, through Christ, is accorded to the penitent sinner: but he is not, on that account, exempted from temporal punishment. To the hour of his death he pays the penalty of his long-forsaken and long-aborred transgressions.

Now, if this naked *matter of fact* be all that the bishop would express by the word *satisfaction*; or if he would include in the idea *punishments of sin, like that of David, sent specially, and not in the mere way of cause and effect, from God*, I apprehend, that, throughout all the protestant churches, he would not find a single opponent.

From much eloquent declamation, employed by the bishop in this precise line of argument, I had begun to hope, that *one* at least of our differences had originated from simple misapprehension: but my hope became more and more faint, as I advanced in my perusal of his lordship's discussion.

Instead of viewing temporal punishment, either as *a righteous retribution*, or as *a fatherly chastisement*—the only two modes in which I can find it represented throughout Holy Scripture—the bishop, not content with gratuitously carrying it into the next world, seems evidently to consider it in the light of *a meritorious expiation* made on our part, when we either devoutly submit to it as sent from

God, or when we freely and artificially inflict it upon ourselves. I *may* be mistaken; and I hope that I *am* mistaken in my estimate of his lordship's theory: but, from his occasional intimations, though he never explicitly defines the word *satisfaction*, I find it difficult to form any other conclusion.*

In my fear that I am *not* mistaken, I am painfully confirmed by yet another mode in which the bishop seems inclined to view the Latin doctrine of satisfaction.

It is not *always*, he apprehends, that a man makes satisfaction to the justice of God by *temporal suffering*: much also, he conceives, may be done in that way by what he denominates *satisfactory works*; such as, agreeably to his own express enumeration of them, abstinence, and fasting, and the care of widows and orphans, and alms giving, and the visitation of the sick; works, he observes, which in the Latin church are reckoned among the most important satisfactions.†

The *excellence*, and (under *one* aspect) the *necessity*, of these good deeds, we of the reformed churches most fully allow, but this is not precisely the question. The bishop clearly deems them *meritorious*: for, unless that be the case, I perceive not how they can make an expiatory satisfaction to God for our transgressions. Now it is under this precise idea of their alleged *meritoriousness*, that the language and doctrine of our Latin brethren are thought by us to be objectionable. *We acknowledge*, says the accurate Hooker, *A DUTIFUL NECESSITY of doing well: but THE MERITORIOUS DIGNITY of doing well*

* I give the bishop's own words. Satisfaire, autant qu'il est en nous, à la justice, de son Père.—Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 211. Parce que nous sommes hors d'état d'acquitter la dette entière, serions nous dispensés de faire quelques efforts pour entrer en paiement suivant nos facultés et nos moyens?—Ibid. p. 216. L'obligation de satisfaire et apaiser le ciel par des œuvres expiatoires.—Ibid. p. 221.

† Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 222.

*we utterly renounce.** This, I believe, is the doctrine, not only of the church of England, but of all the reformed churches; the doctrine, not only of the reformed churches, but of that venerable and most ancient church, which, by a long line of succession connecting itself immediately with the primitive ages, may claim the high and extraordinary praise of *not* being a reformed church, simply because it *required not* reformation. With the depressed, but unextinguishable, church of the Piedmontese valleys, we all, if I mistake not, agree in this important point. We confess **THE DUTY**, but not **THE MERIT**, of good works: and, viewing them under that aspect, we thence consistently deny the possibility of their making any expiatory satisfaction to God for our transgressions.

The same principle we, of course, extend to every species of temporal punishment. When sent from God, we would humbly submit to it: and, as the apostle speaks, we would deem it the fatherly chastisement of the Lord, "at present, indeed, not joyous 'but grievous, nevertheless, afterward yielding the 'peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are 'exercised thereby.'"† But, with such a view of the question, in the language of our own Hooker, "We dare not call God to reckoning, as if we had 'him in our debt-books. The little fruit which we 'have in holiness, it is, God knoweth, corrupt and 'unsound. We put no confidence at all in it: we 'challenge nothing in the world for it. Our constant 'suit to God is and must be, to bear with our infirmities, and to pardon our offences."‡

In this lowly estimate even of our best performances, we hold ourselves to be justified, not only by the express decision of Scripture, but by the entire

* Hooker's Disc. of Justific. § vii.

† Heb. xii. 5—11.

‡ Hooker's Disc. of Justific. § vii.

analogy of the Christian faith. So far from calculating a proportionable correspondence between *merit* and *reward*; we deem it more seemly, to adopt the words which our Saviour Christ hath prepared for us, and to confess that when we have done all, we have done nothing more than our bare DUTY:* instead of ascribing to our works any even remote possibility of making *satisfaction* to God for our many evil deeds; the whole analogy of faith, as propounded luminously by the great apostle himself to the church of Rome, compels us to take up a doctrinal system diametrically opposite.† The doctrine of *merit*, and the doctrine of *duty*, in short, lie at the very root of the differences between the church of Rome and the church of England.

II. As usual, the bishop quotes the fathers in favour of his speculation: and it must be owned, that Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Augustine, all speak of our making satisfaction to God by the temporal pains which we endure.

If they use the term in his lordship's apparent sense, I shall have no hesitation in saying, that their grossly unscriptural language merely shows how soon and how easily a specious and flattering corruption crept into the church. But I greatly doubt, though I would speak under correction, whether their meaning has not been altogether misapprehended. We all know, that, in the idiom both of the Greek and of the Latin, the same phrase indifferently signifies *to give satisfaction* and *to suffer punishment*. This very simple circumstance, I strongly suspect, is the true key to the phraseology employed by certain of the fathers. When they spake of a man making satisfaction to God for his sins by any measure of temporal suffering, they meant not, I apprehend, to intimate, that his pains were meritorious, and that they were capable of expiating his transgressions;

* Luke xvii. 10.

† Rom. iii. 19—28. v. 16—21. xi. 6.

but they meant merely to say, that we must expect sin to be attended by merited punishment.

Be this, however, as it may, if we are to be guided by the authority of the primitive doctors, I should certainly prefer the very ancient testimony of St. Paul's own fellow-labourer, the Roman Clement, to the much later evidence of Tertullian, or Cyprian, or Ambrose, or Augustine.

"All are glorified and magnified, not through themselves, or through their own works, or through the righteous deeds which they have done, but through the will of God. We, therefore, being called through his will in Christ Jesus, are not justified through ourselves, or through our own wisdom, or intellect, or piety, or the works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but through faith, by which the Almighty God hath justified all from everlasting. To him be glory and honour through all ages. What then shall we do, brethren? Shall we be slothful from good deeds, and shall we desert the faith? The Lord forbid such to be our case! Rather let us hasten, with all vehemence and alacrity, to accomplish every good work."*

So far as a *positive* argument will go, it is difficult to believe, that the man who wrote thus could hold the doctrine of a meritorious satisfaction to be made to God either by holy deeds or by acute sufferings: and, so far as we may build upon a *negative* argument, the *total silence* of Clement, in regard to any such satisfaction as that maintained by the bishop, affords much reason for suspecting, that in *his* days the catholic church knew nothing of the doctrine. Equally difficult, unless I greatly mistake, will his lordship find the task of extracting his theory from the remains either of Polycarp or of Ignatius.

III. The bishop asks, whether *to appease the*

* Clem. Roman. Epist. ad Corinth. i. § 32, 33.

anger of God, and to satisfy his justice, do not ultimately come to the same thing.*

I readily answer, no. The difference consists in the total dissimilarity of ideas conveyed respectively by those two phrases. Sincere repentance, offered up through the alone merits of Christ, is no doubt available to *appease God's anger*, when we have sinned against him: but such repentance does nothing to *satisfy his justice* in the way of making a meritorious expiation. To talk, indeed, of *the expiatory meritoriousness of repentance* is a plain contradiction in terms. By the very act of repentance we acknowledge ourselves to be *sinners*: but what possible expiatory meritoriousness can there be in a sorrowful acknowledgment and direct confession that we are great and undeserving offenders? Clearly there can be none: unless, indeed, we are prepared to maintain the actual existence of that moral paradox, *a meritorious sinner or a holy transgressor*.†

IV. It has been confidently asserted by the bishop, that Christ made satisfaction for our sins *only* so far as to exempt us from *eternal* punishment, and that we ourselves must supply the defect by undergoing *temporal* punishment, or by performing certain *meritorious* actions in the way of *an expiatory satisfaction* to God for our transgressions. This doctrine his lordship boldly avows to be the undoubted mind of Christ; and he claims to prove it, both from Scripture and from the primitive church.

In each line of argument he has completely failed. The *earliest* church is decidedly against him: and

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 222.

† The bishop claims, as an ally, the poem of our commination office. It seems to me, when viewed in connexion with the whole tenor of our articles and homilies, merely to import, that penitence and fasting are a useful mean of putting our souls in a proper posture to meet their God. I cannot perceive any thing in it, which at all assimilates to the doctrine of meritorious expiatory satisfaction.

his meagre proof from Scripture is limited to the mourning of Job on account of his trials, to the repentance of David, and Ahab, and the king of Nineveh, and to a singular perversion of a very plain passage of St. Paul, wherein the apostle speaks of the afflictions of Christ the head being filled up in the afflictions of his mystical body, the church.* How *these* are to demonstrate, that *either sufferings or good deeds can make temporal expiatory satisfaction to God for our varied transgressions*, I am unable to comprehend. There is not so much as the slightest perceptible coherence between the bishop's premises and his conclusion. When thrown into the form of a syllogism, his whole argument runs in manner following:—

Job mourned on account of his trials: David, and Ahab, and the king of Nineveh, repented in sackcloth and ashes: and the afflictions of Christ are still prolonged in the afflictions of his body, the church. THEREFORE temporal punishments and holy deeds are able, by their expiatory meritoriousness, to satisfy the strict justice of our heavenly Father.

In laying his foundation, the bishop has altogether failed; and the natural consequence will be the downfall of his superstructure. As he himself is perfectly aware, for the whole plan of his discussion evinces it, the connected doctrines of indulgences, and purgatory, and prayers for the dead, all rest ultimately upon the basis of meritorious satisfaction. The basis being unsound, the superstructure cannot stand.

* Coloss. i. 24.



CHAPTER XI.

The Difficulties of Romanism in respect to Indulgences.

INDULGENCES sprang out of the penitential discipline of the primitive church. Persons, who had lapsed into idolatry, or who had been guilty of any scandalous crime, were separated by ecclesiastical authority from the body of the faithful: nor were they re-admitted, until, by a course of austere penitence, they had sufficiently evinced their sincerity and their amendment. The church, however, which, like every other well-organized society, possessed and exercised the power of ejecting or receiving members, was induced, when she had well-grounded reason to believe repentance sincere, occasionally to relax the severity, or to shorten the time of this required probation. When that was done, the grace, accorded to the penitent, was naturally styled *an indulgence*.

Such, and such only, were the indulgences of the primitive church: and I know not what objection can be rationally taken to the system of her moral discipline.

But, when the unscriptural notion of *a meritorious expiatory satisfaction to God* was annexed to the ancient probationary penance required by the church, the same idea infected also the simple primitive indulgence. If self-inflicted punishment for sin, or punishment inflicted by ecclesiastical authority, could make an expiatory satisfaction to the divine justice: then the power of remitting such punishment was equivalent to the power of declaring, that the church,

according to her own good pleasure and discretion, could assign to the divine justice a smaller measure of expiatory satisfaction than *that* justice would otherwise have claimed. Now this extraordinary speculation, in pursuance of which the church undertook to determine, that God not unfrequently was and ought to be satisfied with a lighter degree of expiation, than his own justice, if left to itself, would have exacted from the offender: this extraordinary speculation sprang naturally and of necessity from the new doctrine of *an expiatory satisfaction to God* engrafted upon the primitive very harmless, or rather laudable, discipline of penance and indulgence.

The revolting arrogance of so strange a speculation, when plainly exhibited in its true colours, and when no longer decorated or disguised by the specious eloquence of the bishop of Aire, must, I think, shock every well regulated mind.* To imagine that the divine justice would agree to be satisfied with a smaller quantity of expiation than the amount of its original requirement, and that each priest enjoyed the singular privilege of adjusting the terms of this yet more singular bargain between God and his creature, is contrary alike to Scripture and to every consistent idea which we can form of the divine attributes. Yet this theory was but the legitimate offspring of the new doctrine of satisfaction as superadded to the old penitential discipline of the church.

I. We are assured, however, by the bishop of Aire, that indulgences, viewed (be it observed) under the present precise aspect, rest upon the authority of St. Paul.

That great apostle, says he, teaches us positively, that to the church belongs the double right of prescribing and of mitigating satisfactory punishments.†

For the establishment of this position, the bishop refers to two connected passages in the two epistles to the Corinthians: but, in neither of those passages,

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xiii.

† Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 227.

can I discover the slightest vestige of any punishments, which, in his lordship's sense of the word, can be denominated *satisfactory*.*

According to the ancient and godly discipline of the primitive church, the Corinthians, as St. Paul expresses himself, had delivered an incestuous member of their community *unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*.† This they did under the immediate sanction of the anxious apostle: and afterward, when they were satisfied as to the sincerity of the man's contrition, they pardoned him the disgrace which he had brought upon the church, and readmitted him to the enjoyment of his former privileges as a baptized christian. The circumstance and the ground of his readmission were communicated to St. Paul; and St. Paul, in reply, informs them, that, as *they* had forgiven the offender, so likewise did *he* for their sakes in the person of Christ.‡

Such was the very simple transaction, from which the bishop has learned, that, by the special authority of St. Paul, to the church belongs the double right of both prescribing and mitigating satisfactory punishments: punishments, that is to say, according to the bishop's avowed doctrine, which should be able to make a meritorious expiatory satisfaction, not merely to the outraged church viewed as a body-corporate, but even to the divine justice itself. Yet, where is there a single syllable about any such meritorious satisfaction being made to the justice of God, from the beginning to the end of the entire narrative?

II. Bad, however, as indulgences may be when viewed under the present most unscriptural aspect, their evil admitted of a still higher degree of sublimation.

The bishop of Aire, himself a most respectable ecclesiastic, has no hesitation in pronouncing, with or without the consent of his church, that *the validity*

* 1 Corinth. v. 1—5. 2 Corinth. ii. 6—10.

† 1 Corinth. v. 5.

‡ 2 Corinth. ii. 10.

*of indulgences, like the validity of absolutions, entirely depends upon the dispositions of the sinner.** This, no doubt, is making the best of the matter: but a lamentable story yet remains to be told.

His lordship treads lightly over ground, which he is too good and too sensible a man to deem hallowed. What was the crying abomination, which first roused the indignant spirit of the great and much-calumniated Luther? The pope actually drove a gainful pecuniary traffic in ecclesiastical indulgences! Instruments of this description, by which the labour of making a fancied meritorious satisfaction to God by penance or by good works was pared down to the dwarfish standard that best suited the purse of a wealthy offender, were sold in the lump, to a tribe of monastic vagabonds, by the prelate, who claimed to be upon earth the divinely-appointed vicar of Christ. These men purchased them of the pope, by as good a bargain as they could make; and then, after the mode of travelling-pedlars, they disposed of them in retail to those who affected such articles of commerce, each indulgence of course bearing an adequate premium. The madness of superstition could be strained no higher: the Reformation burst forth like a torrent; and Luther, with the Bible in his hand, has merited and obtained the eternal hatred of an incorrigible church.

III. It is worthy of observation, that the bishop is wholly silent as to the imaginary fund, whence the inexhaustible stock of papal indulgences is supplied. Whether he was himself ashamed of the doctrine of supererogation, or whether he thought it imprudent to exhibit such a phantasy before the eyes of his English correspondent, I shall not pretend to determine. From whatever motive, the bishop omits it altogether. His lordship's defect, however, is abundantly supplied by the authoritative declaration of the reigning pontiff.

"We have resolved," says pope Leo in the year

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 229.

1824, "by virtue of the authority given to us from heaven, fully to unlock that sacred treasure, composed of the merits, sufferings, and virtues, of Christ our Lord, and of his virgin mother, and of all the saints, which the author of human salvation has intrusted to our dispensation—To you, therefore, venerable brethren, patriarchs, primates, arch-bishops, bishops, it belongs to explain with perspicuity the power of indulgences: what is their efficacy in the remission, not only of the canonical penance, but also of the temporal punishment due to the divine justice for past sin; and what succour is afforded out of this heavenly treasure, from the merits of Christ and his saints, to such as have departed real penitents in God's love, yet before they had duly satisfied by fruits worthy of penance for sins of commission and omission, and are now purifying in the fire of purgatory, that an entrance may be opened for them into their eternal country where nothing defiled is admitted."*

From a stock of merits, which the pope claims to have at his disposal, indulgences are issued, which shall not only remit the canonical penance imposed by the church, but which shall also liberate the fortunate possessors from the temporal punishment due for past sin to the divine justice, and which shall open the doors of purgatory to those suffering spirits who departed without having made full satisfaction for their iniquities by fruits worthy of penance.

These then, it seems, are the avowed doctrines and practices of the Latin church, not merely during the dark ages of barbarous credulity, but in the full light of the nineteenth century: these are the high behests of that church, which, according to the explicit declaration of its visible head to every protestant community, is the mother and mistress of all other churches, and out of which there is no salvation.*

* Bull for the observance of the Jubilee, A. D. 1825.

CHAPTER XII.

The Difficulties of Romanism in respect to Purgatory.

FOR his mode of treating the subject of purgatory, I feel it impossible not to honour the bishop of Aire.*

Instead of vainly labouring to establish the doctrine on some one or two misinterpreted texts of the New Testament, he fairly and honestly confesses, that we have received no revelation concerning it from Jesus Christ. Hence he judiciously wastes not his time in adducing passages of Holy Writ which are altogether irrelevant.

"Had it been necessary for us," says he, "to be 'instructed in such questions, Jesus would doubtless 'have revealed the knowledge of them. *He has not 'done so.* We can, therefore, only form conjectures 'on the subject more or less probable.'"†

The doctrine, then, of purgatory is confessedly *NOT a matter of revelation*: whether it be true or false, we confessedly CANNOT ascertain from *anything that Christ has said on the subject*.

This difficulty would have startled an ordinary theologian: but, though Christ himself has not revealed the doctrine, the bishop of Aire can clearly demonstrate its truth by an easy and simple inductive process.

I. We must make, argues his lordship, an expiatory satisfaction to the divine justice, either in this world or in the next. Few men, however, make a full expiatory satisfaction in this world: therefore they

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xiii. † Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 242.

must make it in the next. Now, in the next world, they can no longer pursue good works, no longer distribute alms, no longer offer any compensatory reparations to heaven. One only method of making satisfaction remains to them: that, to wit of suffering. But, if suffering be the sole method of making satisfaction which remains to them hereafter, then, indisputably, there must be a place where this suffering is undergone. Now the place, which has been thus proved to exist, is, by the Councils of Florence and Trent, conventionally denominated *purgatory*.*

With the name appropriated to this scripturally unknown land, I am no way disposed to quarrel: for anything that I can see to the contrary, it is very appropriate and expressive. The *name* is unexceptionable; but the *demonstration* is faulty. As Demosthenes says, the war itself will discover the weak points of Philip.

The whole demonstration of the existence of purgatory, as set forth by the bishop of Aire, rests upon the primary position, that *we must make an expiatory satisfaction to the divine justice, either in this world or in the next*. If that position fail, the demonstration fails with it. Now I have already shewn, on the fullest evidence, that the doctrine of *an expiatory meritorious satisfaction, to be made by man to the divine justice, through the medium either of good works or of penal sufferings*: I have already shewn, that this doctrine is altogether false and

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 242—244. The bishop attempts to perplex the English layman by reminding him of the separate abode of departed spirits, during the interval which elapses between death and judgment.

"You believe," says he, "the existence of such a place, though its local position is unknown to you. Rest then assured of the existence of purgatory, though we may not be able to define its strict local position." Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 242, 243. Note.

If any English layman be perplexed by such an argument, he must certainly have forgotten, that the point at issue is not **THE LOCALITY**, but **THE EXISTENCE**, of purgatory.

unfounded. Such being the case, the attempted demonstration of the existence of purgatory, which avowedly reposes upon it, must needs be wholly inconclusive. But the bishop has confessed, that the doctrine of purgatory has not been *expressly revealed*: and I have shewn, that he has failed to demonstrate its truth by *inductive reasoning*. Therefore, so far as I can discern, we have no proof whatsoever of the truth of the doctrine of purgatory.

II. The case might now well seem entirely hopeless: but the bishop has yet another argument in reserve.

"All antiquity," says he, "speaks of an intermediate place, where souls, before they enter into heaven, must be purified from the slightest stains of iniquity."*

1. On a point, confessedly *not revealed in Scripture* and *incapable of proof by inductive reasoning*, I should not be disposed very greatly to defer to antiquity, even if *ALL antiquity* were in one story, which the bishop declares to be the case. His lordship's own references, however, tacitly correct the largeness of his phraseology.

Cyprian, who flourished *about the middle of the third century*, chronologically ushers in the period which the bishop denominates *ALL antiquity*: and this very Cyprian, *comparatively late* as we must pronounce his testimony, is not *for* him, but *against* him.

This father mentions, as a practice of the Christians in the third century, that, as often as they commemorated the passions of the martyrs on the anniversaries of their martyrdoms, they always offered up sacrifices for them: and he also speaks with praise of an episcopal arrangement, by which it was ordained, that, in the case of persons under certain specified circumstances, no sacrifice should be celebrated for their repose.†

* Discuss. Amie. vol. ii. p. 243. Note.

† Cyprian. Epist. xxxix. p. 77. Epist. i. p. 3.

Such is clearly the language of Cyprian; and, by such language, the bishop has no less clearly been deceived.

The sacrifices, offered up for the martyrs and for other pious members of the church on certain anniversary days, were not, as the bishop imagines, *prayers for the liberation of their souls from purgatory*: but they were *sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, like those of more than one of our canonical Anglican prayers, on the ground that these pious men had now departed out of this life in the faith and hope of Christ.**

It is possible, that the bishop may urge against me a passage in the Epistle to Antonianus, where the holy father speaks of persons being long purified in fire for their sins, ere they are admitted into the bliss of heaven.†

I am fully aware of the existence of that passage: but I deem it no proof, that Cyprian held the modern Latin doctrine of purgatory. Had the bishop read the note of Rigaud on the place, he must at least have acknowledged, that, in the abstract, Cyprian's language is ambiguous. To my own apprehension, the learned commentator has fully established, that Cyprian speaks only of the allegorical fire of penitential austerities through which the lapsed were required to pass by the early discipline of the church. Not only does the context of the passage demonstrate Rigaud to be in the right; but another passage also, not noticed by him, clearly evinces the propriety of his interpretation.

“When once we have departed hence,” says Cy-

* See the prayers in the communion service, the burial service, and the fifty-fifth canon: and compare Heb. xiii. 15.

† Cyprian. Epist. lv. p. 109. I am unable to say, whether the bishop means to refer to this passage or not: for he and I use two different editions of Cyprian. His only reference is to Epist. ii. But, in this Epistle, as it stands in the Oxford edition of 1682, which is the edition used by myself, there is no mention made either of purgatory or of prayers for the dead.

prian, "there is no longer any place for repentance, no longer any effectiveness of satisfaction. Here, life is either lost or held: here, we may provide for our eternal salvation by the worship of God and the fruitfulness of faith. Let not any one, then, be retarded, either by sins or by length of years, from attaining to salvation. To a person, while he remains in this world, repentance is never too late. Those, who seek after and understand the truth, may always have an easy access to the indulgence of God. Even to the very end of your life, pray for your sins: and, by confession and faith, implore the one only true Deity. To him, who confesses, pardon is freely granted: to him, who believes, a salutary indulgence is granted from the divine pity: and, IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH, HE PASSES TO A BLESSED IMMORTALITY."*

2. In the large phraseology of the bishop of Aire, ALL *antiquity* commences with Cyprian, who flourished *about the middle of the third century*.

Yet, I pray, was Cyprian the *very earliest* of the fathers? Why did not his lordship cite, in favour of the doctrine which he advocates, Clement of Rome, and Polycarp, and Ignatius, and Justin, and Irenæus, and Athenagoras, and the old anonymous writers, whose works are usually printed along with those of Justin? Why were not these *much more ancient* fathers adduced, as unanimously vouching for the doctrine of purgatory? If we attend to their testimony, we shall discover the reason of the bishop's prudent preterition.

On the supposition, then, that ALL *antiquity teaches the doctrine of purgatory*, how came Clement to be totally silent respecting it, even when expressly treating of death and the resurrection?† How happened he so entirely to forget it, as to declare, that

* Cyprian. ad Demetrian. p. 196. See also Epist. xii. p. 27, 28.

† Clem. Epist. ad Corinth. i. § 23—27.

*when once we shall have departed this life, there is no room for us in another, either to confess or to repent.**

Why did Polycarp avowedly discuss the resurrection of the dead, and yet wholly pretermitt the doctrine of purgatory?†

Why did Ignatius assert, that *two* states only in the future world, *a state of death* and *a state of life*, are set before us; so that every one, who departs, shall depart to his own proper place: and why did he not set forth that yet additional *third* state, which, under the name of *purgatory*, makes so conspicuous a figure in the theology of the Latin church?‡

Why did Irenæus, without presuming to say a word about purgatory, content himself with simply intimating, that *the souls of the dead shall depart into an invisible place prepared of God for them, where they shall abide in constant expectation of the resurrection and reunion of the body?*§

Why did the old writer, in the works of Justin Martyr, pursue a train of reasoning, on the pardon of the lapsed under the dispensation of grace, which is wholly *incompatible* with a belief in the doctrine of purgatory?||

Why did Athenagoras professedly write an entire treatise on the resurrection of the dead; and yet, notwithstanding the nature of his subject, leave the state of purgatory wholly unnoticed and unmentioned?¶

But I forbear. The English laity will ere now, I trust, be sufficiently convinced, that *ALL antiquity* does not speak of an intermediate place, where souls, before they enter into heaven, must be cleansed from their smallest pollutions in the fire of purgatory.

* Ibid. ii. § 8.

† Polycarp. Epist. ad Philip. § ii. vii.

‡ Ignat. Epist. ad Magnes. § v.

§ Iren. adv. Hær. lib. v. c. 26. § 2, 3.

|| Quæst. et Respons. ad Orthod. in Oper. Justin. quæst. xcvi. p. 350, 351.

¶ Athenag. de Resurr. Mort. in Oper. p. 143—219.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Difficulties of Romanism in respect to prayers for the Dead.

RESPECTING the existence of purgatory, by the bishop of Aire's very candid acknowledgment, Holy Scripture is perfectly silent. Equally silent also is it respecting the obligation or the benefit of prayers for the dead offered up by the living. Neither the *one* nor the *other* does it mention: to neither the *one* nor the *other* does it even make so much as the very slightest allusion. Concerning *both*, on the supposition of the truth of the *one* and the duty of the *other*, it maintains a reserve most singularly unaccountable.*

It is true indeed, that, from the few and indistinct notices of a future state which occur in the Hebrew Scriptures, we might not have much reason to be surprised at *their* silence on the present topics: but, when we recollect that it was a special office of Christ to *illuminate life and immortality through the Gospel*,† it is utterly incredible, that the light-giving Saviour should have vouchsafed us no sort of revelation concerning purgatory and prayers for the dead, had the former really existed, and had the latter been a pious and profitable duty.

On the awful truths of the next world, our Lord is copious and distinct, alarming and consolatory. We have the whole fearful machinery of the last day placed, as it were, visibly before our very eyes: the sheep on the right hand of the Judge; the goats

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xiii.

† 2 Tim. i. 10.

on the left hand. We hear, as it were with our very ears, the irreversible doom of weal or woe. The doors of the adytum are thrown open: the mystery, hidden or but dimly perceived through a long succession of ages, is unreservedly declared to the whole universe. Yet, respecting purgatory and prayers for the dead, the great and all-knowing hierophant is profoundly silent.

I. In place of any proof, either from the Hebrew Scriptures, or from the Scriptures of the New Testament, that *prayers for the dead are the duty of the living*, the bishop produces a meagre and scanty attestation from the apocryphal history of the Maccabees, which his church has taken upon herself to pronounce canonical.

"If Judas had not hoped," says the author of that history, "that they who were slain should have 'risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray 'for the dead.'"*

The poverty of the bishop I blame not. He has done what he could: and mortal man can do no more. Proof from the *genuine* Scriptures he was unable to bring: and we cannot reasonably censure him for not accomplishing an impossibility; we cannot equitably impeach him for not producing a nonentity. Christ, it is true, is silent on the subject: but what Christ has not taught, we may learn from Judas Maccabeus.

This is no time for discussing the canon of Holy Scripture: nor shall I enter upon a topic, which has already been handled most sufficiently by persons far more competent than myself. Yet, since the bishop has thought it good to inform the English laic, that the reformers of the sixteenth century removed the Maccabæan history from the canon, purely to rid themselves of the evidence which it bears to mortuary supplications, and thence implicatively to the doctrine of purgatory:† it may not be improper to

* 2 Macc. xii. 44.

† Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 246.

remind his lordship of the language employed by an author, with whom he is intimately acquainted, and who certainly had no concern in the evil deeds of the sixteenth age.

“Have nothing in common with the Apocrypha,” said Cyril of Jerusalem, in the fourth century, to the Competentes, who were preparing themselves for baptism: “Have nothing in common with the Apocrypha, but study those books which we read in the church. The apostles and the ancient bishops, who delivered those books to us, were much wiser than you. As children, therefore, of the church, set not upon her authorized documents the adulterating seal of a false impression.”*

The canon of the Old Testament, as propounded by Cyril to his pupils, differs not from the canon received by the innovators of the sixteenth century, save that it inserts the book of Baruch; which book, as it exists not in the Hebrew, the Jews, who might be supposed to have some slight acquaintance with their own canon, have never recognised. Subsequent more careful examination led Augustine, and the Greek church, and the Councils of Carthage and Laodicea, to reject from the canon this book, which Cyril’s list includes in it: the fathers of the Council of Trent best know the grounds on which they reinstated that composition. As for the Maccabæan history, which has rendered such essential service to the bishop of Aire, it is among those proscribed apocryphal books, which the archbishop of Jerusalem exhorts the illuminated most diligently to renounce, on the ground that it was not delivered to the church by the apostles and the ancient bishops.

II. His lordship, however, meets us with a negative, as well as with a positive argument.

If Christ did not teach us the duty of praying for the dead by his *words*, he assuredly taught it no less forcibly by his *silence*.

* Cyril. Catech. iv. p. 37.

This is not so great a paradox, as, at first sight, it might well be deemed: and the bishop has contrived to make out a very plausible case from very unpromising materials.

"The language of Judas Maccabeus, or of his historian," argues the bishop, "proves indisputably that 'the practice of praying for the dead prevailed among the Jews. Now Christ never censures this practice; **THEREFORE** he tacitly sanctions it.'"

We must confess, I fear, that Christ never censured the practice in so many precise words; yet his apostle John received a communication, which can scarcely be reconciled with the ordinance of praying for the dead, that their souls might be liberated from the fire of purgatory.

I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me: Write; blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.†

The dead in the Lord, then, are *blessed*: and, whensoever they depart hence they *rest* from their labours. Now, if it were necessary for them to enter into purgatory, ere they were admitted into a state of beatitude; which according to the bishop, **ALL** must do, since the fire of purgatory must cleanse us even from our *slightest* stains:‡ they would *not*, immediately after death, *rest* from their labours; for his lordship himself being judge, purgatory does not hold forth to its inmates the accommodation of a bed of roses. Therefore, by an inevitable consequence from the plain words of Holy Writ, they enter *not* into a purgatory, from which they may be prematurely liberated by the suffrages of the living.

III. What the bishop cannot prove from Scripture either positively or negatively, he hopes to prove from the respectable human authority of the old fathers.

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 248. † Rev. xiv. 13.

‡ Doivent être purifiées de leurs *moindres* souillures. Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 243. Note.

1. Among these, the most ancient, that he produces, is Tertullian; who flourished at the end of the second, and at the beginning of the third, century: for his lordship, doubtless because he found in them nothing to his purpose, carefully pretermits the *earliest* ecclesiastical writers.

From the bishop's small success with Cyprian, whom Tertullian chronologically preceded, we shall not anticipate much benefit to his cause through the agency of Tertullian.*

(1.) "On a certain annual day," says that father, "we make oblations for the dead and for nativities."†

By the word *nativities*, as employed by Tertullian, we are to understand, according to the phraseology of the primitive church, not the literal birthdays of the living, but the allegorical birthdays of the dead; the days, that is to say, on which the departed saints were born out of this present evil world into a new and better state of existence.

Now the *same* oblations, we see, were made both for *the dead themselves*, and for *these their allegorical nativities*. Hence, plainly, the oblations must have been made for each under the *very same* aspect, and under the influence of the *very same* idea. But, for the allegorical nativities of the departed saints, it is evident, that the figurative sacrifice of *prayer* could not have been made: because, even were we so inclined, we *cannot* pray for the death of those who are *already* dead. The oblations, therefore, mentioned by Tertullian, must have been oblations, not of *prayer*, but of *thanksgiving*.

Such being the case, his oblations for the *dead*, being assuredly of the same nature as his oblations for *the allegorical nativities of the dead*, are not, as the bishop imagines, *prayers* for the dead, whereby they may be extricated from the fire of purgatory: but, on the contrary, they are *thanksgivings* for the

* See above, Book i. chap. 12. § II. 1.

† Tertull. de Coron. Mil. § iii. p. 449.

dead, analogous to those mentioned by Cyprian; in other words, they are *thanksgivings to Almighty God for having taken unto himself the souls of the departed brethren.*

This, I think, is plainly the meaning of the *sacrifices* and *oblations* for the dead, mentioned by Cyprian and Tertullian. They were strictly eucharistic and commemorative: eucharistic for the pious dead in general; commemorative, of the martyrs in particular, whose names were on these occasions publicly recited.*

(2.) But, though such be clearly enough the meaning of the *oblations* noticed by Tertullian, we must not dissemble, that, under one particular aspect, even *prayers* for the dead are certainly, in his individual capacity, sanctioned by that father.

At the conclusion of his treatise on the soul, he advocates a notion, that the abode of a departed spirit in the prison of the intermediate state might be prolonged, and that its final resurrection might be delayed, on account of the smaller sins which it had committed in the flesh.† This notion, having been once adopted by the speculative African, forthwith produced the additional idea, that prayers might be advantageously offered up by the living, both for the comfort of a soul in hades, and for its participation of

* See Cyprian. Epist. xii. p. 27, 28. The language of Justin Martyr sufficiently explains the true nature of the *oblations* and *sacrifices* mentioned by Tertullian and Cyprian. Writing about the middle of the second century, he assures us, that christians, in their form of worship, recognise no *oblations* and *sacrifices* save the purely spiritual *oblations* and *sacrifices* of *prayer* and *thanksgiving*. Apol. i. vulg. ii. p. 46. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 270. Now, that the ancient *oblations for the dead* were not *prayers*, I have fully shewn. Therefore they must have been *thanksgivings*. I have cited Justin lest any one should contend, that the *oblations for the dead* mean what the Latins call the *sacrifice of the mass*, in which the priest is said to offer Christ both for the quick and for the dead. The testimony of this early father, to the specific nature of the ancient Christian *oblations* and *sacrifices*, is utterly fatal to any such speculation.

† Tertull. de Anim. Oper. p. 689.

the first resurrection without experiencing a procrastination to the second resurrection.*

Prayers, then, for the dead, under *such* an aspect, he doubtless recommends: but these prayers, even to say nothing of their resting on the mere authority of a fanciful individual, bear not the slightest resemblance to those prayers, by the instrumentality of which, according to the theory of the Latin church, the souls of the defunct are liberated from purgatory.

2. With Tertullian the bishop adduces Cyprian and Chrysostom and Augustine, as being all favourable to the doctrine of purgatory and to the practice of praying for the dead.

Cyprian I have already disposed of.† As for Chrysostom and Augustine, who flourished at the latter end of the fourth and at the beginning of the fifth century, I freely allow (and the bishop may make the most of my concession) that, in their time, prayers for the dead and the notion of a purgatory (though by no means identical with the purgatory of the modern Latins) had crept into the church, now rapidly declining into unscriptural superstition.‡

* Tertull. de Monogam. § ix. Oper. p. 578.

† See above, Book I. chap. 12. § II. 1.

‡ For the sentiments of Chrysostom *himself*, the bishop refers to his sixty-ninth Homily to the people of Antioch: and he exhibits him as there saying, that *The apostles with good reason enjoined the commemoration of the dead, whenever the mysteries are celebrated; for they well knew, that the dead thence derived both utility and profit.* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 251.

His lordship and myself may probably have used different editions of Chrysostom, in which his Homilies are differently arranged: but certainly, in the edition now before me, (Lutet. Paris. 1609), no such passage occurs in the sixty-ninth Homily, though its opening treats of the commemoration of the martyrs.

Where the *apostles* enjoin the commemoration of the dead at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, on the ground that the dead are benefitted by such a practice, I am constrained to profess myself altogether ignorant.

CHAPTER XIV.

An Historical Sketch of the Rise of Prayers for the Dead and of the Doctrine of Purgatory.

To trace the rise of such speculations, as the doctrine of purgatory and the duty of praying for the dead, is a matter of mere curiosity; nor shall I attempt any thing beyond a bare sketch. The whole is gratuitous and altogether unnecessary to my argument: it may be viewed, as strictly a work of liberal supererogation.

I. Prayers for the dead, that they might be comforted in the separate abode of departed spirits, and that without any penal delay they might be made partakers of the first resurrection, were recommended by Tertullian at the latter end of the second century.*

This crude phantasy, then (so far as I know) *first* started by an imaginative individual, though in itself wholly unconnected with the doctrine of a purgatory, was not suffered to rest under the form in which it had been originally exhibited: and the hint of the African father was at length expanded into a theory, which in *his* time could have been but little anticipated.

II. Of prayers for the dead, on a principle which at least *approximates* to the *purgatorian* principle, the earliest distinct traces, which have come within the compass of my own reading, occur in the mystical lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem.†

* Tertull. de Anim. Oper. p. 689. Tertull. de Monogam. § ix. Oper. p. 578.

† There is a prayer for the dead in the *Apostolic Constitutions*: but, in this prayer, the existence of any purgatory is neither mentioned nor even supposed. The prayer merely supplicates, that God would pardon all the sins of the dead and would forthwith receive them into glory. Constit. Apos. lib. viii. c. 41. The prayer is followed by some directions respecting the commemoration of the dead. Ibid. c. 42.

Prayers for the dead are also mentioned by Epiphanius of Sala-

This author, it is true, does not precisely mention purgatory; neither does he say any thing as to a fire, which is appointed to purify men from their sins, and from which they may be liberated sooner than they otherwise would have been by the suffrages of the living: but, in his language, a place of penal though not of eternal separation from God, whence departed spirits might be extricated by the prayers of surviving friends, is certainly implied and understood. The souls of the dead, he thinks, are greatly benefited by the prayers of the living, offered up during the celebration of the Eucharist: and he illustrates the condition of such souls, by the supposed case of a king, who had banished certain of his rebellious subjects from his presence, but who had afterward been persuaded at the instance of their friends and relations to remit their punishment.

That both the speculation and the practice, however, were then in their infancy, the language of Cyril clearly demonstrates: for he himself mentions the opposition which was made to them, not by a *few* merely, but by *MANY*.*

III. Such was the state of matters in the time of Cyril: and it is evident, I think, that the earliest cor-

mis, who flourished contemporaneously with Cyril of Jerusalem: but they are not connected with any thing which bears the least resemblance to a purgatory. Epiphanius expresses himself with much indignation against the heretic Aërius; who, objecting to the custom of reciting the names of the dead in the office of the Eucharist, inquires, how the dead can be benefited by the prayers of the living; and remarks, that the adoption of such a practice can only tend to promote immorality, because a wealthy offender may always take care to purchase the venal suffrages of a survivor. Yet, when he himself in reply comes to state his own views of the subject, he is totally silent as to the existence of any purgatory: and, instead of intimating that the prayers of the living are effectual to liberate the souls of the dead from a place of this description, he contents himself with comparing prayers for the dead to prayers put up on behalf of a friend when engaged in taking a long journey. In fact, so far from intimating that the subjects of these prayers are in purgatory, he expressly speaks of them as existing and living with the Lord. Epiph. adv. Hær. lib. iii. hæ. 75.

* Cyril. Catech. Mystag. v. p. 241.

ruption, engrafted upon the original fanciful speculation of Tertullian, was the transmutation of *the old thanksgiving for the pious dead* into *prayers for the souls of the dead in general*; or rather, to express myself somewhat more accurately, *prayers for the souls of the dead in general* were superadded to *the old thanksgivings for the happy departure of the pious dead*. But, when we reach the days of Augustine, we find incontrovertible proof, that both prayers for the dead and the notion of a purgatory had become familiar to a now unhappily degenerating church.

1. There is a very odd sort of hesitation in Augustine respecting the whole matter, which clearly enough indicates, that in *his* days the superstition had not been perfectly digested, though it gradually acquired strength and consistency.

(1.) In a work, which professedly treats of *the care that ought to be taken for the dead*, that great father refers to the well-known passage of the Maccabæan history, where prayers and sacrifices for the souls of the defunct are mentioned and vindicated :* but, unable to produce any legitimate sanction of the practice from *canonical* Scripture, he finally winds up the whole disputation with the prudent remark, that *many things may profit us if we know them*, but that *our ignorance of them can do us no very serious mischief*.

On this secure conclusion is built the doctrine, that it is best to pray for the souls of all the regenerate collectively ; lest any departed person, who *might* be benefited by our orisons, should unfortunately be omitted : and the reason assigned is, that *it is far more eligible, that souls, who will be neither the better nor the worse for our prayers, should have too much ; than that souls, who may really be benefited by them, should have too little.*†

(2.) Thus speaks Augustine, in his treatise on *the*

* 2 Macc. xii. 43—45.

† August. de Cur. pro. Mort gerend. c. i. xvii. Oper. vol. iv. p. 255, 261.

care of the dead : but, in one of his sermons, we find him waxing somewhat bolder.

“Beyond all doubt,” says he, “the dead are assisted by the prayers of holy church, and by the salutary sacrifice, and by the alms which are given for the repose of their souls; so that the Lord may deal more mercifully with them than their sins deserve : for this has been handed down by the fathers, and is observed by the whole church. Such exercises most assuredly profit the dead: but then those persons only are benefited, who have so lived before death, that these things may be useful to them after death.”*

(3.) So again, in his treatise on *the eight questions of Dulcitius*, he half inclines to think, that the fire, which St. Paul mentions as burning the defective works of a christian, though the christian himself is saved as by fire, may perhaps be a purgatory: through the fire of which all must pass alike, whether they have built upon the true foundation gold and silver and precious stones, or whether they have only accumulated upon it wood and hay and stubble.†

That some such thing as this occurs after the present life, he observes, *is far from being incredible.*‡

(4.) But, when he comes to treat directly of *purgatory itself*, though still relying for his scriptural proof upon the self-same passage of St. Paul, he speaks with almost as much positiveness, as if the silence of Christ had been subsequently remedied by a special revelation from heaven to himself.

“By that transitory fire,” he remarks, “concerning which the apostle says, He himself shall be saved yet so as through fire; not deadly, but only minute, sins are purged.—Whoever is conscious that any deadly sin rules within him, that person, unless he shall have worthily reformed himself, and (if space be afforded him) shall have done penance for a long time, and shall have been bountiful in alms-giving,

* August. Serm. de Verb. Apost. xxxii. Oper. vol. x. p. 138.

† 1 Corinth. iii. 10—15.

‡ August. de Oct. Dulcit. Quæst. Oper. vol. iv. p. 250.

‘and shall have abstained from his sins: that person
 ‘cannot be purged in the transitory fire concerning
 ‘which the apostle speaks; but the eternal fire will
 ‘torment him without any remedy. As for minute
 ‘sins, though they cannot slay the soul, yet they so
 ‘deform it by a sort of leprosy, that, with difficulty,
 ‘or at least with great confusion, they suffer it to
 ‘receive the embrace of the heavenly bridegroom.
 ‘Let such sins then be redeemed by continual prayer,
 ‘and by frequent fasting, and by larger alms, and
 ‘above all by the forgiveness of our enemies; lest,
 ‘when accumulated, they should sink the soul into
 ‘perdition. But, whatever of those sins shall not
 ‘have been thus redeemed, it must be purged in the
 ‘fire mentioned by the apostle.—On this principle,
 ‘if we thank God for depriving us of our friends or
 ‘of our substance, confessing with true humility that
 ‘we suffer less than we deserve; our sins will be
 ‘purged in this present world, so that in the future
 ‘world that purgatorial fire shall find either nothing,
 ‘or certainly but little, to burn away. But, if we
 ‘neither give thanks unto God in tribulation, nor
 ‘buy off our sins by good works; we must, under
 ‘such circumstances, remain in the fire of purgatory
 ‘just so long a time, as it may require to burn away
 ‘our smaller sins, like wood and hay and stubble.’*

2. Thus, after much vacillation, Augustine seems finally to have adopted, so far as *principle* is concerned, the identical dogma of a future purgatory which is now held by the church of Rome. Yet, though in *principle* the purgatory of Augustine is the same as the purgatory of the Latins, in its *arrangement* it differs very widely and essentially.

According to the theory of the Roman church, the soul, *immediately* after its separation from the body, passes into a *present purgatory*: yet the duration and intensity of its sufferings in that place of torment may be abbreviated and relaxed by the prayers of the living.

But, according to the theory of Augustine, the

* August. de Igne Purgat. Serm. iv. Oper. vol. x. p. 382.

purgatorial fire, through which the soul must pass, is *the fire which consumes the world at the day of judgment*: whence it would follow, that the prayers for the dead, recommended by that father, are not prayers by which the soul may be liberated from *a present purgatory*; but that they are prayers, which may avail to give the soul a better passage through *the yet future transitory fire at the general consummation*.*

The difference is striking: and, when united both with the previous vacillation of Augustine and with the total silence of the fathers of the three first centuries, it clearly shews, that the doctrine of purgatory, as now held by the church of Rome, was completed only by slow degrees, and in the lapse of a considerable period.

3. Augustine, we see, rests his proof of a purgatory upon a text of Holy Writ, which the bishop of Aire has had the good sense and prudence not to adduce.†

The doctrine being a novelty, the exposition of the text is obviously a novelty also. Though Augustine could at length, after much hesitation, extract from it the tenet of a purgatory, his chronological predecessors, Tertullian and Origen, in the second and third centuries, were not quicksighted enough to discover in it any such extraordinary dogma.‡ Their more ancient expositions of the text differ entirely from the more recent gloss of Augustine.

* August. Enarr. in Psalm. ciii. conc. 3. Oper. vol. viii. p. 430. August. de Civit. Dei. lib. xx. c. 26. Oper. vol. v. p. 253. It is not improbable, that Augustine may have borrowed this notion from a conjectural hint, which had been previously thrown out by Origen. See Orig. adv. Cels. lib. iv. p. 168, 169. lib. v. p. 240, 241. lib. vi. p. 292, 293. The idea itself seems to have been ultimately taken from those successive purgatorial catastrophes of the world, whether by a deluge of water or by a deluge of fire, which constitute so conspicuous a feature in many of the ancient systems of theological philosophy, both oriental and occidental. See Orig. adv. Cels. lib. iv. p. 173. lib. v. p. 244, 245.

† 1 Corinth. iii. 10—15.

‡ See Tertull. adv. Marcion. lib. v. § 11. p. 304. Orig. adv. Cels. lib. iv. p. 168, 169.

CHAPTER XV.

The Difficulties of Romanism in respect to the Invocation of the Saints.

WE are informed by the bishop of Aire, that the invocation of the saints, as recommended and practised in the Latin church, is nothing more than *a simple request of their intercessory prayers on our behalf*.*

Planting himself upon this ground, he certainly exposes, with much felicity, the weakness of some very common, though very inefficient, protestant objections.

If it be lawful, argues the bishop, to solicit the prayers of our living friends, how can it be unlawful to solicit the prayers of our dead friends? If the intercessory prayers of our living friends trench not upon the high speciality of Christ's prevailing mediation; why should the intercessory prayers of our dead friends be inconsistently charged with the impiety of any such encroachment? If a knowledge of distant transactions, and even a power of reading the human heart, might be communicated to Elisha and Peter upon earth;† why may not the same power, to any extent which God shall deem expedient, be communicated to the saints in heaven? To say, that the omniscience of God is invaded by the communication of this knowledge, and that the circumstance of its communication must thence be physically impossible, is most nugatory and most inconclusive. For, if to a saint in heaven were communicated a knowledge so large that he could hear at once the invocation of all living men in all parts of the world: still that knowledge would be immeasurably distant

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xiv. † 2 Kings v. 26. vi. 12. Acts v. 3.

from the omniscience of God. No reasonable man, therefore, can venture to say in the abstract, that the communication of such knowledge is a virtual impossibility.*

Thus argues the bishop of Aire: but, as the strict accuracy of his premises may well be doubted, so the true principle of objection, even to that mitigated invocation of the saints which he has undertaken to defend, he has never once mentioned.

I. By the voice of revelation itself, we are expressly authorized to solicit the intercessory prayers of our living friends: but Scripture no where enjoins or even sanctions the practice of soliciting the intercessory prayers of our dead friends.

Such being the case, when we ask the prayers of our living friends, we act in strict conformity with God's word, and we are therefore assured that we are acting properly: but, when we ask the prayers of our dead friends, we gratuitously turn aside from the royal highway; and we know not into what devious paths we may ultimately be permitted to wander.

1. Were we unable to give any satisfactory reason for the singular and alarming difference which I have pointed out; still, even in that case, it would be quite sufficient to say, that such a difference actually subsists.

God, in his infinite wisdom, has thought fit to put a marked difference between *our soliciting the intercessory prayers of the living*, and *our soliciting the intercessory prayers of the dead*. The former action he *has* expressly allowed: the latter action he *has not* expressly allowed. Respecting the one, he speaks permissively; respecting the other, he is totally silent. Such a difference, we may be sure, he would not have placed between two apparently homogeneous actions without some very good and sufficient reason. Here, then, it is our duty and our wisdom to rest; certain that, in all his matters, God never acts lightly and fortuitously.

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 265—275.

2. But, while the mere existence of the difference would be an amply-sufficient landmark for our conduct; still, though with the deep humility befitting worms of the earth, we may not unfrequently discern the very principle of the divine proceedings. Such, I apprehend, is the case in regard to the present topic.

Why did God authorize us to solicit the prayers of the living, and yet did *not* authorize us to solicit the prayers of the dead.

The reason seems to have been this: When we solicit the intercessory prayers of our living friends, we are in no danger of lapsing into any undue or superstitious veneration of them: but, when we solicit the intercessory prayers of the departed saints, we are in very considerable danger of falling into habits altogether irreconcilable with the undivided allegiance which we owe to the Creator.

(1.) This danger is by no means chimerical. Experience of the past, and prophetic anticipation of the future, might alike have taught the waning church its dire reality.

Of the Gentiles, the entire polytheism consisted in the worship of the demon-gods, most curiously associated with sabianism and materialism: and these demon-gods, as we are explicitly assured by the best-informed pagans, were no other than the departed souls of canonized mortals.*

Such was the worship, into which the apostate Israelites declined, when they joined themselves unto Baal-peor, and ate the offerings of the dead.† It was not that they ever absolutely renounced the adoration of Jehovah: but, apparently deeming him far above out of their sight, while they distantly viewed him with a decent, ineffective reverence, they addicted themselves to the more palpable funereal orgies of Thammuz, or Adonis, or Baal, or Osiris.

Such also is the worship, into which, according to the sure word of prophetic revelation, certain members of the church catholic would lapse in the latter

* See my *Origin of Pagan Idol.* Book I. chap. i. † Psalm cvi. 28

times. *The Spirit*, says St. Paul, *speakeeth expressly, that in the latter times some shall apostatize from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines concerning demon-gods.**

(2.) Possibly the bishop of Aire may say, that this exposition of the apostle's prophecy is a mere protestant gloss, excogitated for the evident purpose of imprinting a stigma upon the Latins.

Should the bishop so say, he would err. I speak not at present of the conduct of the Latins, whether it be justifiable or unjustifiable: I put the church of Rome entirely out of the question: I am concerned only with the abstract interpretation of the prophecy: I meddle not with its particular application.

Now the abstract interpretation of the prophecy, as given above, was *not* devised by some protestant expositor, for the mere purpose of serving a turn in controversy. This identical abstract interpretation of the prophecy was, in truth, the abstract interpretation received by the early church, *certainly* twelve centuries, *probably* more than twelve centuries, before the era of the Reformation. The primitive believers, as we learn from Epiphanius, understood St. Paul to have foretold an apostasy in the christian church to the worship of canonized mortals, which should be strictly analogous to the apostasy in the ancient Hebrew church to the worship of Baalim or departed hero-gods.†

* 1 Tim. iv. 1.

† The passage, whence I collect that such was the interpretation of the prophecy adopted in the early church, is too remarkable to be omitted.

"Some persons," says Epiphanius of Salamis, who flourished in the earlier half of the fourth century, "are mad enough to honour 'Virgin as a sort of goddess. Certain women have transplanted 'this vanity from Thrace into Arabia. For they sacrifice a bread-cake in honour of the Virgin: and, in her name, they blasphemously celebrate sacred mysteries. But the whole matter is a 'tissue of impiety, abhorrent from the teaching of the Holy Spirit: 'so that we may well call it a diabolical business and a manifest 'doctrine of the spirit of impurity. In them is fulfilled this prophecy of St. Paul: Certain persons shall apostatize from the 'faith, attending to fables and doctrines concerning demon-gods."

(3.) On the whole, when we consider the strong tendency in human nature to lapse into a superstitious veneration of the illustrious dead, and when we further recollect the actual existence of a prophecy that *certain branches of the catholic church would apostatize into this identical superstitious veneration*; we shall find no great difficulty in developing the principle, on which God has allowed us to request the prayers of our living friends, while he has given us no authority to implore the prayers of the departed saints.

The former practice *could not* lead us into idolatry: the latter practice *might*, and most probably *would*, produce that result.

‘For the purport of the apostle’s declaration is this: They shall pay divine worship to the dead, even as men formerly paid such worship in Israel. In like manner also, the glory due unto God has been changed into error by those who see not the truth. For the natives of Neapolis still sacrifice to a girl, whom I take to have been the daughter of Jephthah: and the Egyptians honoured Thermutis, Pharaoh’s daughter, as a goddess: and many such things as these have happened in the world to the seduction of those who are seduced. But we christians must not indecorously honour the saints: rather ought we to honour him, who is their sovereign Lord. Let, then, the error of seducers cease. The Virgin Mary is no goddess. To the peril, therefore, of his own soul, let no one make oblations in her name.’ Epiph. adv. Hær. lib. iii. hær. 78.

From the passage before us it is indisputable, that, by the early church, the apostle’s *demonia* were understood to mean, not *devils*, but *demon-gods*: that is to say, his *demonia* were thought to be the souls of canonized mortals. Equally indisputable is it, that the prophecy was explained, as announcing a lamentable apostasy in the christian church to the worship of dead men, who during their lives had been revered on account of their virtues or their services.

The same apostasy to the worship of dead men is clearly foretold also by St. John; who adds some additional particulars, by which the predicted apostates might be the better distinguished whenever they should be developed.

And the rest of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demon-gods and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. Rev. ix. 20.

The predicted worshippers of dead men, were also, it seems, to be worshippers of images; which they would fabricate to themselves out of various materials.

For, since *the idolatrous worship of the dead* is foretold, as about hereafter to creep into the church; we can scarcely conceive a more likely mean for its introduction, than this precise *unauthorized* practice of invoking the departed saints and especially the blessed Virgin to intercede with God on our behalf.

II. The basis, upon which rests the entire argument of the bishop of Aire, is the position, that, *If it be lawful to ask the intercessory prayers of our living friends, it cannot be criminal to ask the intercessory prayers of our dead friends.*

Such being the case, it is evident, that the bishop defends the practice of invoking the saints **SOLELY** and **EXCLUSIVELY** on the ground, that **NOTHING MORE** is requested from them than the benefit of their intercessory prayers.

Hence we must obviously conclude, that, in the judgment of the bishop, genuine orthodoxy permits not a single iota beyond *a request to the saints that they would intercede for us with God.* For, since the invocation of the saints is defended *upon this special ground* **ALONE**; the bishop tacitly confesses, that *on any other ground* it is indefensible.

The avowed premises, then, of the bishop are these: *In their invocation of the saints, the Latins* **MERELY** and **SOLELY** request the benefit of their intercession.

Now, of these very premises, which avowedly form the basis of the entire argument, I more than doubt the accuracy.

1. That they are not *perfectly* accurate, is openly acknowledged even by the bishop himself.

"If any one of our doctors," says he, "pushed on by a blind zeal, has gone so far as to ascribe to the saints a degree of power and efficacy which belongs only to Jesus Christ; know, that we vindicate not his excess: and it were unjust to make the catholic body in general responsible for certain exaggerations in particular."*

* *Discuss. Amic.* vol. ii. p. 274, 275.

Doubtless such treatment of the collective Latin church were unjust: yet, if an unauthorized and unscriptural practice bring forth the evil fruits of certain exaggerations injurious to the high dignity of our only Lord and Saviour, I should think, that this circumstance does not speak much in favour of the practice. Be this, however, as it may, though the bishop's reluctant confession be warily thrown into the hypothetical form, it clearly amounts to an acknowledgment, that *certain of the Latin doctors, pushed on by a blind zeal, have gone so far as to ascribe to the saints a degree of power and efficacy which belongs only to Jesus Christ*. Hence, according to the bishop's own confession, there have been doctors in the Roman church, who, not content with *merely asking the saints to intercede for them*, have invoked those imaginary patrons in such a manner, as to imply of necessity that *they possess a degree of power which belongs to God incarnate alone*. Such conduct his lordship tenderly denominates *an excess*: I am myself unable to distinguish it from *idolatry*.

2. But, while the bishop professes not to vindicate this conduct, and while he avowedly rests his defence of hagiolatry upon the *exclusive innocence of begging the mere intercession of the saints*; he himself shews, by the very adduction of his own selected authorities, that he is prepared to go far beyond a simple request that they would intercede for him in prayer to the Almighty.

In vindication of the Latin practice, he adduces Irenæus, Origen, Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa, Asterius, Ephrem, Athanasius, and Cyril of Alexandria: and he says, doubtless very truly, that he could have filled a whole volume with such citations. Of *whatever these fathers maintain*, therefore, the bishop, by the very circumstance of his adduction, professes *his full and entire approbation*.

What then is it, which these fathers *do* maintain? In their invocation of the saints, do they confine

themselves to a simple request, that those saints would intercede for them? Or do they advance far beyond any such narrow and limited and insipid petition?

The oldest of them, Irenæus, says not a word about *any* invocation whatsoever:* others of them *merely*

* Irenæus calls the Virgin Mary *the advocate* of the virgin Eve: whence, I presume, the bishop is willing to infer that, if in the judgment of Irenæus *an advocate*, Mary might in the judgment of Irenæus be safely *invoked*. Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 279.

Such implied reasoning, even if we choose to understand Irenæus literally, is altogether inconclusive. It is neither impossible nor improbable, though in truth we know nothing about the matter, that glorified saints in heaven may pray for the well-being of the church upon earth: but, on such a supposition that the Virgin Mary is thus our advocate, I perceive not how we are thence authorized to *solicit* her intercession. The conclusion does not legitimately follow from the premises.

I wish, however, that the bishop had compared Irenæus with Irenæus, ere he had produced with so much confidence the authority of that father.

"As Eve," says Irenæus in the passage *defectively* cited by the bishop: "As Eve, by the discourse of a fallen angel, was seduced to apostatize from God, disobeying his word: so Mary, by the discourse of a good angel, was evangelized, that she should bear God in her womb, obedient to his word. And, as the former was seduced to disobey God: so the latter was persuaded to obey God; in order that the Virgin Mary might thence become the advocate of the virgin Eve. Thus, as the human race was doomed to death through a virgin: so the human race might be delivered also through a virgin; the balance being equally held, between the disobedience of one virgin, and the obedience of another." Iren. adv. Hær. lib. v. c. 16. § 3.

From a tasteless love of unmeaning antithesis, Irenæus amuses himself with running a laborious parallel between the virgin Eve and the Virgin Mary: and, as man fell through the disobedience of Eve and was restored through the obedient parturition of Mary, he chooses, in the course of it, rhetorically to denominate the latter *the advocate* of the former. What he means, is plain enough from his own concluding explanation; which, however, the bishop has chosen totally to omit: but, if any one doubt the meaning of Irenæus, let him turn to another passage, where that father runs the self-same parallel with a distinct and explicit statement of its purport.

"As Eve, by disobedience, became the cause of death both to herself and to the whole human race: so Mary, though having a predestined husband, yet being obedient as a virgin, became the cause of salvation both to herself and to the whole human race. —Thus did the knot of Eve's disobedience receive its solution through the obedience of Mary: for what the virgin Eve bound

request the intercessory prayers of the saints, according to the mode which the bishop has prescribed as the standard of Latin orthodoxy: but others of them, again, so far as I can judge, certainly ascribe to the saints a degree of power and efficacy which belongs to God incarnate alone.

Gregory Nazianzen, as cited *approbatively* by the bishop, beseeches Cyprian and Athanasius and Basil, now called to their everlasting rest, that they would cast down their regards upon him from on high, that they would govern his discourse and his life, that they would conjointly feed his flock, that they would give him a more perfect knowledge of the Trinity, that they would draw him where they themselves are, and that they would place him in the midst of them and their assemblies.*

Asterius, as also cited *approbatively* by the bishop, supplicates the martyr Phocas, that he would pray for the sufferings and maladies of surviving christians, as he himself had prayed to the martyrs his predecessors: and he further begs, that Phocas, in the plenitude of his power, would give to his survivors those blessings which he himself possesses.†

Basil, as likewise cited *approbatively* by his lordship, advises that, whoever is in trouble, he should address himself to the saints; whoever is in joy, he should do the same: in the first case, that he may be delivered from his troubles; in the second, that he may be secured in his prosperity.‡

Cyril of Alexandria, as finally cited by the bishop *with full approbation*, prays to St. John the apostle, that he would open to him the mystery of the Word of God descending into this nether world, that he would teach him something grand and sublime, that

‘by her unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed by her faith.’ Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 33. § 2, 3, 4.

No person, I think, can compare these two passages together without perceiving, that, when Irenæus calls Mary *the advocate* of Eve, he simply means to say, that, as death came into the world by Eve, so life was restored to Eve and all her posterity, not excepting the virgin-mother herself, through the rhetorical advocacy of Mary.

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 282.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. p. 285.

he would remove the stone and discover to him the well of life, that he would give him power to draw water from it after his own example, and that he would conduct him to the proper source.*

The bishop defends the invocation of the saints, on the express ground, that *to ask their intercessory prayers cannot be criminal*; and he declares, that *he vindicates not the excess of any exaggerating doctor, who, pushed on by a blind zeal, has gone so far as to ascribe to the saints a degree of power and efficacy which belongs only to Jesus Christ*: yet does he cite, with entire approbation, four writers, who, so far from limiting themselves to a bare request for saintly intercession, actually beseech the saints to grant to them various graces and blessings and benefits which *God alone* can bestow. Cyril of Alexandria erects St. John into a second Holy Ghost: Gregory Nazianzen prays, for illumination and direction, to Basil and Cyprian and Athanasius: Basil invokes the saints for deliverance in adversity, and for grace in prosperity: and Asterius beseeches Phocas to grant to him an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven. If the bishop *justifies* this offensive idolatry, then he relinquishes the plea, that *nothing is requested from the saints except their friendly intercession*: if he *condemns* it, then he has incongruously quoted Gregory and Asterius and Basil and Cyril against his own certainly more reasonable opinion.

3. Hitherto I have shewn the inaccuracy of the bishop's premises, partly from his own acknowledgment that some of the Latin doctors have ascribed to the saints a degree of power which belongs only to God incarnate, and partly from his own approbative citation of four of the early ecclesiastical writers: I shall now shew it yet more fully from various Latin prayers addressed to the saints, not for the purpose of *simply requesting their intercession*, but for the purpose of *receiving from them what God alone is able to bestow*.

The bishop claims, that the catholic body in gene-

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 285, 286.

ral should not be made answerable for the excesses of a few indiscreetly-zealous doctors in particular.*

I have no wish to controvert the justice of his

* It would have been well, if the bishop, in his treatment of protestants, had always borne in mind the principle of his own claim.

I. His lordship exults over the discrepances of the continental reformers in regard to the invocation of the saints. Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 291—298.

Yet, if we quote against him an idolatrous passage from a Latin author, we are then gravely told, that the Romanists do not vindicate those blindly-zealous doctors who ascribe to the saints a degree of power which belongs only to Christ, and that it were unjust to make the catholic body in general responsible for certain exaggerations in particular. Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 274, 275.

Why the bishop should be at liberty to exult over the discrepances of the continental reformers when slowly emerging from the darkness of many centuries, while it were palpable injustice in a protestant to allege the acknowledged discrepances of the Romanists in the matter of saint-worship, I am unable to discern.

II. Against the reformers of our own church, the bishop, on this point, has not pretended to bring any charge of discrepancy. Omitting every thing of the kind, he is satisfied with merely citing our excellent twenty-second Article.

From the works of Bishop Montague, however, he produces what he would exhibit, as a discrepancy from the doctrine of the Anglican church, and as an honest acknowledgment of the innocence and propriety of the Latin practice.

Now, even had his lordship been *accurate*, still he ought to have remembered the principle of his own claim, and to have refrained from the injustice of making the Anglican body in general responsible for Bishop Montague's exaggeration in particular. But, in truth, he is altogether *inaccurate*: and, had he been careful to consult the English prelate himself, instead of borrowing his information at second-hand from some dishonest controversialist of older times; he would fully have acquitted Montague of romanizing. I am not sufficiently skilled in the works of Latin writers, even to form a conjecture as to the faithless author, who, by the iniquity of fraudulent citation, has thus unhappily misled the respectable bishop of Aire: but I think it evident, that the same culprit, who has misled Mr. Butler in England, has also misled the bishop of Aire in France. Mr. Butler and the bishop alike produce Montague, for the self-same purpose, and in the self-same manner. But such a coincidence cannot be accidental: they certainly must have equally borrowed from the same source of misrepresentation. That the unprincipled author, whom at second-hand they have incautiously followed, has exhibited Montague under totally false colours, is a fact of which any person may satisfy himself by a bare inspection of the original. It is, however, superfluous for me to say any more on the subject: the matter has already been fully discussed by Dr. Philpotts. See Letters to Butler, p. 55—60.

claim: but what will he say, should it turn out, that the injurious exaggerations to which he darkly alludes, are the property, not of mere foolish individuals, but of the *Latin church herself*?

The following documents are extracted from the collects and hymns to the saints, in the Hours according to the liturgical use of the church of Salisbury, as printed at Paris in the year 1520:—

*Holy mother of God, who hast worthily merited to conceive him whom the whole world could not comprehend; by thy pious intervention wash away our sins, that so, being redeemed by thee, we may be able to ascend to the seat of everlasting glory, where thou abidest with thy Son for ever.**

Comfort a sinner; and give not thy honour to the alien or the cruel, I pray thee, O queen of heaven. Have me excused with Christ thy Son, whose anger I fear and whose fury I vehemently dread: for against thee only have I sinned. O Virgin Mary, full of celestial grace, be not estranged from me. Be the keeper of my heart: sign me with the fear of God: confer upon me soundness of life: give me honesty of manners: and grant me at once to avoid sins and to love that which is just. O virgin sweetness, there neither was nor is thy fellow.†

O singularly special Virgin, mild among all having delivered us from our sins, make us mild and chaste. Grant to us a pure life: prepare for us a safe journey: that, seeing Jesus, we may always rejoice together.‡

Holy Mary, succour the miserable, assist the pusillanimous, cherish the mourners, pray for the people, interpose on behalf of the clergy, intercede for the devout female sex.§

Let our voice first celebrate Mary, through whom the rewards of life are given to us. O Queen, thou who art a mother and yet a chaste virgin, pardon our sins through thy Son. May the holy assembly

* Collect. in Hor. ad usum Sarum. Paris. 1520. fol. 4. in Burnet's Hist. of the Reform. vol. ii. p. 143.

† Ibid fol. 44.

‡ Ibid. fol. 33.

§ Ibid. fol. 30.

*of the angels, and the illustrious troop of the arch-angels, now blot out our sins by granting to us the high glory of heaven.**

O George, renowned martyr, praise and glory besit thee, endowed as thou art with military glory. By thee, the royal maid, existing in sorrow before the worst of dragons, was preserved. In our soul and inmost heart, we beseech thee, that, with all the faithful, we, being washed from our sins, may be joined to the citizens of heaven: that so, together with thee we may joyfully be in glory, and that our lips with glory may render praises to Christ.†

O martyr Christopher, for the honour of the Saviour, make us to be in mind worthy of the love of God. According to Christ's promise, for thou obtainest what thou demandest, grant to thy sorrowful people the gifts which thou hast demanded by dying. Confer comfort, and remove heaviness of mind: and cause, that the examination of the Judge may be mild toward all.†

O William, thou good shepherd, father and patron of the clergy, cleanse us in our agony; grant us aid; remove the filthiness of our life; and grant the joys of a celestial crown.‡

O ye eleven thousand glorious maids, lilies of virginity, roses of martyrdom, defend me in life by affording to me your assistance: and shew yourselves to me in death by bringing the last consolation.§

* Collect. in Hor. ad usum Sarum. Paris. 1520. fol. 80. in Burnet's Hist. of the Reform. vol. iii. † Ibid. fol. 77. ‡ Ibid. fol. 78.

§ Ibid. fol. 80. Bishop Burnet has given the Latin originals of all these extraordinary prayers. He adds another, not easily surpassed in blasphemous absurdity. The votary supplicates Christ to save him by the blood of Thomas à Becket, sometime archbishop of Canterbury: and the Lord is reminded, how he has crowned this same Becket with glory and honour, and how he has placed him above all the works of his hands; that so, through the merits and prayers of the said Becket, he may be delivered from the fire of hell. Ibid. fol. 12. No modern Romanist can condemn these prayers, without at the same time condemning the approved liturgy of the entire church of Salisbury, itself in full and uncensured communion with the church of Rome, immediately before the Reformation in England. When such rituals were approved and commonly used in the Latin church of the West, *was, or was not, a reformation necessary?*

The documents now before us are not the mere insulated and unauthorized productions of some indiscreet doctor, who, as the bishop speaks, pushed on by a blind zeal, has gone so far as to ascribe to the saints a degree of power and efficacy which belongs only to Jesus Christ: they are not the productions of a rash individual, for whose exaggerations in particular the catholic body in general must not be made responsible. No such comparatively unimportant character do the documents now before us sustain. On the contrary, they form parts of a regularly-authorized liturgy, according to the use of the church of Salisbury: and, that they met with very general acceptance among what the bishop styles *the catholic body*, seems abundantly evident, from the circumstance of the book, whence they are extracted, having been printed at Paris. All doubt, however, of their acknowledged orthodoxy is removed by the express stamp of papal approbation. To the industrious repeaters of that prayer to the Virgin, which stands the second in the preceding collection, Pope Celestine was pleased to grant three hundred days of pardon: and, as that prayer is one of the most objectionable in the whole number, we may be morally certain that he would be little inclined to condemn the others. Here, then, we have *a collection of prayers to the Virgin and to the saints, publicly used in the liturgical service of the Latin church, and sanctioned by the high authority of the pope himself*. But these prayers, thus circumstanced, go far beyond a mere request, that *the Virgin and the saints would offer up for us at the throne of grace their intercessory supplications: because they idolatrously beseech creatures to grant to creatures those gifts and graces and blessings and benefits, which the Almighty Creator himself is ALONE able to bestow*. The case, therefore, so far as respects the argument professedly and spontaneously adopted by the bishop of Aire, stands, I apprehend, in manner following:—

* Q

If his lordship honour the preceding documents with his approbation: then, he at once vindicates the most revolting idolatry, and relinquishes the ground freely chosen by himself; for he has professed to defend the invocation of the saints, SOLELY and EXCLUSIVELY on the principle, that, *since it is right to ask the intercessory prayers of the living, it cannot be wrong to ask the intercessory prayers of the dead.* But, if he mark the preceding documents with his indignant reprobation, as grossly and disgustingly idolatrous: then he censures the authorized practice of his church; and thus by unequivocally declaring that this alleged infallible church both *may* err and *has* erred, becomes tainted with what the Latins deem heretical pravity.

III. An English laic, not much versed in ecclesiastical antiquity, may perhaps be somewhat startled at the bishop's copious adduction of authorities from the early fathers in favour of hagiolatry; for, if such were the practice of the primitive church, and if this practice (at least as inculcated by Asterius and Basil, and Cyril of Alexandria, and Gregory of Nazianzum) be idolatrous, we shall be compelled to charge idolatry upon the church of Christ, even in that age of purity which immediately succeeded the teaching of the apostles themselves.

Thus may an unversed English layman be well startled by an appalling consequence, which seems inevitably to flow from the bishop's copiousness of citation: nor has his lordship thought it expedient to furnish his correspondent with any clue, by which he may extricate himself from his perplexity. On the contrary, he leaves his Anglican friend to infer, that *the primitive church up to the very time of the apostles, was wont to invoke dead men and women, not only to intercede with God on behalf of survivors, but even to bestow upon them what the Deity alone is able to give.* Such being the case, I shall supply that explanation of the apparent mystery, which the bishop has left unsupplied.

The oldest authority cited by the bishop, is Origen, who flourished about the middle of the third century: for, in regard to Irenæus, whom he likewise cites, and who lived about the year 180, this father, as I have already observed, says not a single word relative to *any* invocation either of the Virgin or of the saints. His *oldest* authority, then, flourished *about the middle of the third century*: and all the others flourished *considerably later*, when apostatic corruption was now rapidly invading the church. As for the *really* ancient fathers, such as Justin and Polycarp and Ignatius and Clement of Rome, the bishop *altogether pretermits them*. Perhaps the English layman may be curious to know the *reason* of this pretermission. Nothing, in good truth, can be more simple. From the *really* ancient fathers we hear not a syllable as to the invocation of dead saints: and the bishop clearly *could* not quote from them, in favour of the practice, *declarations which never existed*. So far as my own knowledge extends, THE BISHOP CANNOT PRODUCE A SINGLE AUTHORITY, FOR THE INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS HOWEVER MODIFIED, FROM THE TWO FIRST CENTURIES.* The English layman will now under-

* Dr. Priestley, I must allow, has discovered, that Justin Martyr, if not precisely a worshipper of the saints, was at least a worshipper of the angels. But it is no disparagement to the learned bishop of Aire, that he has not studied Greek in the same school as Dr. Priestley. This circumstance will perhaps enable us to account for the fact, that his lordship has not cited Justin as a witness. The bishop, I suspect, pretermitting the translation of Dr. Priestley, is content to render Justin's Greek in the same manner as myself. Lest, however, any inferior Latin theologian should be tempted, in an evil hour, to supply the bishop's *apparent* defectiveness of citation, and should thence produce Justin as a primitive advocate of angel-worship, I shall subjoin the original passage, accompanied by the Latin version of Langus, and by Dr. Priestley's, and my own English translations.

'Αλλ' Ἐκείνους τε, καὶ τὸν παρ' αὐτοῦ Ἰδιὸν ἐλθόντα καὶ διδάξαντα ἡμᾶς ταῦτα καὶ τὸν τῶν ἄλλων ἐπομένων καὶ ἐξομολογμένων ἀγαθῶν ἀγγέλων στρατόν, Πνεῦμα τε τὸ προφητικόν, σεβόμεθα καὶ προσκυνούμεν, λόγῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ τιμῶντες, καὶ παντὶ βουλομένῳ μαθεῖν, ὡς ἐδιδάχθημεν, ἀφθόνως παρ' ἰδόντες.—Justin. Apol. i. vulg. ii. p. 43.

stand, why his lordship's very oldest authority is not more ancient than about the year 250.

Thus speaks Justin in his own Greek: and his statement is explained by Langus in manner following:—

Verum Hunc Ipsum (scil. Patrem); *et, qui ab eo venit, atque ista nos et aliorum obsequentiam exequutorumque (ad voluntatem ejus) bonorum angelorum exercitum docuit, Filium; et Spiritum propheticum; colimus et adoramus, cum ratione et veritate venerantes, atque unicuique discere atque nosse volenti, pro eo atque edocti sumus, candide (hæc) tradentes.*

Yet, omitting, for obvious reasons, the latter part of the sentence, Dr. Priestley has given us the following translation of its former part:—

“Him, and the Son that came from him, and the host of other good angels who accompany and resemble him, together with the prophetic Spirit, we adore and venerate, in word and truth honouring them.”—Hist. of Corrupt. part i. sect. 7. Works, vol. v. p. 59.

In the hands, then, of Dr. Priestley, Justin appears as the worshipper of angels: but I can discover nothing in the passage, save an avowal by Justin, on the part of the catholic church, that all christians, within forty years from the death of St. John, worshipped conjointly the Father and the Son and the prophetic Spirit; that they had been taught that doctrine and practice by the generation which immediately preceded them, and which by chronological necessity must have conversed with St. John and his contemporaries; and that, as they had received from their predecessors, so they were prepared freely to communicate to their successors.

“Him *the Father*; and the Son, who came forth from him, and who instructed us both respecting these things, and respecting the army of the other good angels who follow him, and who resemble him; and the prophetic Spirit: *these three* we worship and we adore, honouring them in word and in truth, and ungrudgingly delivering to every person who wishes to learn as we ourselves have been taught.”

I apprehend, that Justin uses the expression *other good angels* relatively to the Son; because it is his unvaried doctrine, that the Son is that angel or messenger of Jehovah, who appeared to the ancient patriarchs, and who always received their adoration as the Supreme Being.—See Justin. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 278—281. These *other* good angels or messengers humbly follow him the chief messenger, resembling him in point of holiness and purity.

The Son and the prophetic Spirit, Justin and *THE WHOLE CHURCH*, as the fact is abundantly indicated by the use of a plural phraseology, adored in conjunction with the Father: but never did that holy martyr worship the angels, save in the unrivalled translation of Doctor Priestley.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Difficulties of Romanism in respect to the Worship of Relics.

‘SOME persons, who call themselves christians,’ says the bishop of Aire, ‘blush not with shameful ingratitude to censure the honours which we pay to the memory of the martyred heroes of our religion. These men charge it upon us as a crime, that we preserve their remains, that we cherish their ashes, that we ornament and visit their tombs: and yet, with strange inconsistency, they attach themselves to the least object, which may recal to their recollection a beloved and departed friend. But, how can that, which in the institutes of society is natural or innocent or laudable, suddenly become, in the institutes of religion, absurd and criminal and idolatrous?’

‘In beholding the relics of the saints, in approaching their mortal remains, a religious awe takes possession of our senses: and the recollection of their virtues and their good deeds vividly impresses itself upon our imagination. A still small voice seems to issue from their tombs, which invites us to admire and to imitate them. These feet, it exclaims, walked constantly in the paths of justice: these hands were always innocent and pure: that mouth was never opened, save either to praise God or to bless and benefit mankind: those limbs ministered only to virtue and charity. Victims of martyrdom or of penance, an eternal weight of glory recompenses them for their passing tribulations: and, while crowns are assigned by Christ to their happy souls in heaven, he will not leave their mortal remains without honour in the dust of the tomb. When we

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‘pray for extraordinary graces, our supplications are
 ‘not addressed to the relics which lie before us, how-
 ‘ever holy and venerable they may be. It is God,
 ‘whom we bless for having glorified them: it is he,
 ‘from whom we implore through them the same
 ‘mercies: it is he, from whom we invoke grace, with
 ‘the assistance and concurrence of this or of that
 ‘saint, whose relics are dear to us, and whose me-
 ‘mory is precious before him. From God then, as
 ‘its source, the worship, with which we honour re-
 ‘lics, originates: and to God, as its end, it ultimately
 ‘and terminatively reverts.

‘These are our sentiments: nor have we ever en-
 ‘tertained any other. If a person believes that we
 ‘hold a different opinion, he deceives himself. Men
 ‘talk of erroneous and superstitious notions, which
 ‘we have often taken up concerning relics: but I have
 ‘never been able to discover them. In the respect
 ‘and the homage, which we pay to the holy relics,
 ‘where can even a shadow of idolatry be discov-
 ‘ered.’*’

I. In this very eloquent passage, the bishop; it must be confessed, has made out a sufficiently plausible case for the use and veneration of relics.

It is true, indeed, that a jealous scripturalist cannot discover by what authority his lordship defends the invocation of grace from God, with the *assistance* and *concurrence* of some favourite saint, whose relics are dear to the ardent votary: neither can he comprehend, why such *assistance* and *concurrence* should be at all necessary to the operations of the Lord omnipotent. It is true, moreover, that he is somewhat staggered with the frank admission, that worship, though professedly originating from God as its source and reverting to God as its end, is nevertheless paid in its progress to insensible relicst. But,

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xv.

† In saying *worship*, I use the bishop’s own language. The title of the letter now under consideration is *Culte des Reliques*; and, in the present passage he says, *Le Culte dont nous honorons les Reliques*.—Discuss. Amic. vol.ii. p. 309.

while *these* particulars in the bishop's case are not altogether satisfactory, we must at least fairly acknowledge, that, if there be no great good, there can be no great harm, in employing the relic of a saint as we employ a lock of hair severed from the head of a dear departed friend; in employing it, that is to say, *for the purpose of exciting devout reminiscences.*

His lordship, then, avowedly rests the whole strength of his argument upon this explanation: and so confident is he of its accuracy, that he declares, that no other sentiments have ever been entertained, and that he has never been able to discover those superstitious notions which have been charged upon the veneration of relics. The entire merit, therefore, of the case rests upon the alleged fact, that *relics are simply used as recordatory aids to devotion*, and that *at no period have they ever been viewed under any other aspect.*

This, if I mistake not, is the position taken by the bishop. Consequently, by the accuracy or inaccuracy of the position, his argument must either stand or fall.

II. The grand objection to the veneration of relics, however innocent it may be in the first instance, is the indisputable fact, that *we have no authority for it in Scripture*, and the too reasonable apprehension that *it will soon degenerate into a rank and degrading superstition.*

That any such degeneracy has ever taken place, the bishop strenuously denies: but, as I have already observed, even in his own statement of the matter, we are encountered by much that is highly objectionable; and, in the citations which he himself has made from certain of the later fathers, and to which others of a similar description may easily be added, we assuredly meet with some strange superstitious phantasies, which convey an idea to the mind very different from that of *a mere excitation of devout recollections.* The bishop, however, rests his argument upon this

last point *exclusively*; with a declaration, that *no other sentiments were ever entertained*. But his declaration is proved, even by his own citations, to be *inaccurate*. His argument, therefore, by the very terms of its statement, becomes *untenable*.

‘Men,’ says his lordship, ‘talk of erroneous and superstitious notions, which we have often taken up concerning relics: but I have never been able to discover them.’

I marvel to hear such language from the learned prelate, when he himself quotes with approbation Basil and Chrysostom and Gregory of Nyssa. The word *superstition* may doubtless convey very different ideas to a catholic of the Gallican church and to a catholic of the reformed English church: but, whatever may be thought of the term itself, the bishop’s citations most certainly prove, *that notions, far exceeding the measure laid down by his lordship, have been attached to the efficacy of relics*.

If we may credit Basil and Theodoret, and Chrysostom and Gennadius, and Euagrius and Gregory the Great, and Gregory of Nyssa, and various others who might easily be mentioned, the relics of the saints are not only useful *as exciting devotional reminiscences*: but they are likewise mighty ramparts, which are capable of protecting towns from the *military assaults of their enemies*; they are champions, by whom all disasters are turned away from us; they are strong rocks, which dissipate and nullify the snares of unseen demons, and all the craftiness of Satan; they possess such astonishing virtues, that the very touch even of the shrine which contains them will bring down a blessing, and that the touch of the relics themselves will accomplish all the desires of those who are admitted to so great a favour.*

* Basil. Homil. xx. in quadrag. Martyr. Oper. vol. i. p. 533. Homil. xxvi. de Mart. Mamant. Oper. vol. i. p. 600, 601. Theodor. de Græc. affect. curat. Serm. viii. Oper. vol. iv. p. 593, 594, 600. Chrysostom. Homil. xxxii. in Epist. ad Rom. Oper. vol. ix.

Several of these extraordinary declarations are *approbatively* cited by the bishop: and yet he roundly declares, so widely does he differ from us Anglicans in his ideas of superstition, that, let men talk as they please of erroneous and superstitious notions in the matter of relics, he himself has never been able to discover them.

p. 759. Homil. lxxix. in Petr. et Paul. Oper. vol. i. p. 856. Homil. lxx. Encom. Martyr. Ægypt. Oper. vol. i. p. 869. Gennad. de Vir. Illust. c. vi. Euagr. Hist. Eccles. lib. i. c. 13. Gregor. Magn. Epist. lib. vii. epist. 23. Gregor. Nyss. in quadrag. Martyr. Orat. iii. Gregor. Nyss. de Martyr. Theod.

The two most curious specimens of reliquary superstition are those mentioned by Gennadius and Euagrius, as referred to above.

From the former we learn, that Nisibis, being a frontier town, and thence liable to be attacked by the enemies of the Roman empire, was fortified by the Emperor Constantine with the body of holy James its defunct bishop; who, for the express purpose of defending it from hostile assaults, was carefully buried within its walls.

By the latter we are taught, that, for a similar military purpose, the body of holy Symeon the Stylite, with his iron chain, was conveyed to Antioch. Here his credit as an efficacious champion rose so high, that the Emperor Leo, anxious for the security of his dominions, wished to obtain from the Antiochians this cheap and therefore peculiarly valuable defence: but the prudent citizens knew too well their own interest to part with it. *Our City has no walls*, was their reply, as we are assured by Euagrius: *hence we brought hither the most holy body of Symeon, that it might serve us in the stead both of wall and of bulwark*. Their reason was so satisfactory to Leo, that he forthwith assented to their wishes. Euagrius adds, that many parts of the body remained to his own time, and that he himself had been privileged to see the head. He further remarks, that, during the episcopate of Gregory, Philippicus solicited a loan of the holy relics, that so he might with the greater safety make a military expedition into the East.

Yet, says the bishop of Aire, after stating his own view of the subject: *These are our sentiments; NOR HAVE WE EVER ENTERTAINED ANY OTHER.*

An English layman, whose studies had run in a totally different line, might probably have found himself unable to contradict the bishop, and might thence have been led implicitly to receive his assertion. It is painful, however necessary, to point out these dangerous inaccuracies, into which I shall always regret that such a man as the bishop of Aire should have fallen.

III. Mere unscriptural superstition, gross and absurd as it may be, is however, I fear, not the only charge which must be preferred against the use of relics.

The bishop himself, while he would exhibit them as *simple recordatory aids to devotion*, speaks nevertheless of a certain *worship* as being their due: and this worship, in *his* description of it, I am unable to distinguish from the worship which is rendered to the Divinity.

According to his lordship's theological system, this worship originates from God and reverts to God: but, in its progress, it rests upon the relics of the saints.

With the bishop's statement I have no wish to deal captiously: yet, so far as I can perceive, the following is the only sense which it is capable of bearing:—

A worship, *originating* from God, and *reverting* to God, must inevitably be a *strict and proper worship of God*. But, according to the bishop, it is with this identical worship, *resting* upon them in its progress *from God to God*, that relics are honoured. Therefore, the self-same worship, which *originatively* and *terminatively* is paid to God, is paid *transitively* to senseless and inanimate relics: for, so far as I can understand his lordship's account of the matter, the worship in question is *first* addressed to God, *next* addressed transitively to relics, and then *finally* once more addressed to God.*

This statement of the mental process of relic-worship, must be received, I apprehend, as the bishop's gloss upon the decision of the second Council of Nice.

* I give the bishop's own words, that, if I have been guilty of any involuntary perversion, my error may be immediately discovered and corrected.

C'est donc de Dieu, comme de sa source, que provient le culte dont nous honorons les reliques; et c'est à Dieu, comme à sa dernière fin, qu'il remonte et se termine. *Discuss. Amic.* vol. ii. p. 309.

‘I adore and honour and salute the relics of the saints, as of those, who have wrestled on behalf of Christ, and who have received grace from him to accomplish healings and to cure disorders and to eject demons: according as the church of the christians hath received from the holy apostles and fathers down even to ourselves.’*

Such is the authoritative decision of that famous council, expressed in the unanimously adopted words of Theodosius the lesser: and, to whatever extent it may require the worship of relics to be carried, the payment of *any* adoration to these objects cannot but strike a plain man as a palpable breach of the second commandment.†

The council, we may observe, anathematizes all persons, who refuse to adore and to honour and to salute the relics of the saints: and, in favour of such extraordinary worship, it boldly pleads the authority of the holy apostles.

Whenever that authority shall be produced, I will freely submit: but, until that requisite preliminary shall have been accomplished, I shall incline to fear the denunciation of God in the second commandment much more than the anathema of the individuals assembled in the second Council of Nice. At all events, the actual use of relics is a matter, which far exceeds their mere employment *for the purpose of exciting devout reminiscences*. Any statement, therefore, to the latter effect, is a statement calculated to mislead rather than to inform an unsuspecting English laic.

IV. The propriety of relic-worship the bishop would demonstrate through the medium of various miracles wrought at the shrines or over the relics of the martyrs.

* Concil. Nicen. secund. act. i. Labb. Concil. Sacros. vol. vii. p. 60.

† By the second commandment I mean the portion of Scripture contained in Exodus xx. 4—6.

Every miracle, recorded in Scripture, I devoutly receive: but I do not therefore pledge myself to admit the portents, which are detailed in the thaumaturgic calendar of a superstitious church. The utterly unscriptural character of the practice, in favour of which these miracles are alleged to have been performed, is alone sufficient to make them suspicious or even worse than suspicious: and, in the nineteenth century, the less his lordship says respecting such apocryphal wonders, the more prudently he will act.

V. But the bishop is willing also to take a somewhat more rational line of argument. Adopting the declaration of the second Nicene Council, and supplying its deficiency of evidence, he would trace the worship of relics to the very apostolic age itself, thus establishing its undoubtedly divine origination.

1. In the Apocalypse, St. John beholds, under the altar in the figurative heaven, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.*

Hence his lordship infers, that the bodies of these martyrs had been buried under the altar of a literal christian oratory, and that they were venerated in the apostolic age precisely as relics are now venerated by the Latin church.

2. When the protomartyr Stephen was dead, devout men, as we Anglicans understand the passage, carried him out for the evident purpose of giving him decent christian burial.†

But the bishop proves from the place, that the

* Rev. vi. 9.

† Acts viii. 2. Compare Sophoc. Ajac. ver. 1071, 1072. The same Greek verb, *συνκμιζω*, is used both by Luke and by Sophocles, for the purpose, as we Anglicans deem, of expressing the same action. No person will suspect, that Menelaus was jealous, lest Teusus should *carry off* the corpse of Ajax for the purpose of converting its several members into relics: yet the bishop would thus interpret the object of the devout men, when they *carried off* the body of the murdered Stephen.

early believers, under the very sanction of the apostles, revered the relics of Stephen.

3. In a similar manner, when Polycarp was dead in the flames, his affectionate flock wishing to extricate the scorched remnant of his body for the plain purpose of decorously burying it, the centurion threw it back into the fire: and the Smyrneans could procure only the calcined bones, which with much lamentation *they disposed of where it was meet*; that is to say, they committed the bones to the grave in which they would have buried the body.*

From these few recorded circumstances, the bishop would establish the fact, that the church of Smyrna, in the second century, preserved and worshipped the relics of Polycarp.

4. Furthermore, the bishop adduces the churches of Africa, in the second and third ages, as rivalling the churches of Asia in their zeal for relic-worship: and he proves his point by the authority of Tertullian and Cyprian. According to his lordship, these fathers speak of sacrifices being offered in honour of the dead: according to myself, they speak of thanksgivings being commemoratively offered up to the Almighty, for that he had been pleased to receive into glory the souls of the departed martyrs.†

Hence the bishop demonstrates the zeal of the early African churches for the alleged apostolic practice of relic-worship.

If, what is well nigh impossible, the exemplary bishop of Aire has a personal enemy; the bitter wish of that enemy will be, that his lordship may always thus argue against the principles of the church of England.

* Epist. Eccles. Smyrn. § xvii, xviii.

† Tertull. de Coron. Mill. § iii. Oper. p. 449. Cyprian. Epist. i, xii, xxxix. Oper. p. 3, 27, 28, 77.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Difficulties of Romanism in respect to the Veneration of Images.

FROM his vindication of relic-worship, the bishop of Aire proceeds to the arduous task of defending the veneration of images.*

I. That images are actually worshipped in the church of Rome, the bishop is so far from denying, that he himself cites with praise the decision of the second Council of Nice.

‘The honour paid to the image passes to its prototype: and he, who *adores the image*, adores in it the ‘person of him whom it represents.’†

This passage, unless I wholly misunderstand it, declares that we adore the image with the same species of worship as we adore its original. Hence, if the image represent the Virgin Mary, we adore the image with the same worship as we adore the Holy Virgin: and hence, if the image represent Christ, we adore the image with the identical worship which we render to God incarnate.

II. Lest, however, we should labour under any misapprehension, let us again hear the second Nicene Council: and let us afterward attend to the exposition, which has been given by James Naclantus, bishop of Clugium.

1. In the first action of the council, we are presented with the following explicit decision, under the form of a creed or symbol:—

‘I confess and agree and receive and salute and ‘adore the unpolluted image of our Lord Jesus Christ ‘our true God, and the holy image of the holy mother

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xvi.

† Council Nicen. secund. act. vii. Labb. Concil. Sacros. vol. vii. p. 556.

‘of God who bore him without the conception of seed. In like manner, also, I receive and adore the images of the holy apostles and prophets and martyrs and fathers and eremites; not, however, as gods.—To those, who adore not the holy and venerable images, let there be anathema.—To those who blaspheme the precious and venerable images, let there be anathema.—To those, who diligently teach not the whole Christ-loving people to adore and salute the venerable and holy and precious images of all the saints, let there be anathema.’*

2. Thus speaks the second Council of Nice: let us now attend to the exposition of the bishop of Clugium, which was published at Venice in the sixteenth century, and which (so far as I am aware) has never been censured or prohibited by the pope and church of Rome.

‘We must not only confess, that the faithful in the church worship *before* an image; as some oversqueamish souls might peradventure express themselves: but we must furthermore confess, without the slightest scruple of conscience, that *they adore the very image itself*; for, in sooth, they venerate it with the identical worship wherewith they venerate its prototype. Hence, *if they adore the prototype with that divine worship which is rendered to God alone, and which technically bears the name of Latria, they adore also the image with the same Latria or divine worship*; and, if they adore the prototype with Dulia or Hyperdulia, they are bound also to adore the image with the self-same species of inferior worship.’†

* Concil. Nicen. secund. act. i. Labb. Concil. Sacros. vol. vii. p. 60, 61. See also act. vi. p. 541. In this place a distinction is expressly made, between *using images commemoratively only*, and *using images adoratively*: and those persons, who maintain the former opinion to the exclusion of the latter, are condemned as heretics. The same idolatrous strain pervades the epistle of the patriarch Tarasius to Constantine and Irene in the seventh action of the council, p. 577—585.

† Ergo non solum fatendum est, fideles in ecclesia adorare

Nothing is more evident, than that Naclantus is here giving a regular exposition of the image-worship, enjoined, under pain of its anathema, by the second Nicene Council: and nothing, so far as I can judge, is more evident also, than that his exposition is perfectly accurate. Now the church of Rome fully acknowledges the second Council of Nice, as a legitimate and infallible council: therefore, the established doctrine of the church of Rome, as set forth ably and clearly from the second Nicene Council by James of Clugium, is, that 'the worship paid to an 'image of Christ is the very same in kind and degree 'as the worship paid to Christ himself.'

III. By way of hiding the deformity of this idolatrous council, the bishop of Aire attempts to set up a difference between *absolute worship* and *relative worship*.

Absolute worship, of whatever degree, is paid to the prototype alone: relative worship, on the contrary, is the sole worship paid to the image.*

I admit, that, according to the council, 'he, who 'adores the image, adores in it the person of him 'whom it represents:' and thence I admit also, that the image would not be adored, save on account of its supposed relation to the person of whom it is deemed the similitude. But still I am unable to discern, how the bishop's distinction can absolve his church from the awful charge of gross idolatry. The most ignorant pagan, in bowing down before his idol, never thought of adoring it, except with that species of worship which the bishop terms *relative*. His constant language, as we learn from Arnobius, was,

coram imagine, ut nonnulli ad cautelam forte loquuntur; sed et adorare imaginem, sine quo volueris scrupulo: quin et eo illam venerantur cultu, quo et prototypon ejus. Propter quod, si illud habet adorare Latria; et illa, Latria: si Dulia vel Hyperdulia; et illa pariter ejusmodi cultu adoranda est. Jacob. Naclant. Clug. Expos. Epist. ad. Roman. cap. i. cited in Homil. iii. against peril of idolatry. p. 197. Oxon. 1802.

* *Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 326.*

‘Not that brass and gold and silver, when fashioned into statues, are gods; but that, through these images, the invisible gods are honoured and worshipped.’* The ancient pagan and the modern bishop of Aire alike contend for the propriety of what they alike denominate *relative adoration*. But, if this relative adoration be not idolatry, it is difficult to comprehend how the sin of idolatry could *ever* have existed: for no person ever yet worshipped an idol without reference to the being, whom that idol was thought to represent.

That the adoration of images is enjoined by the second Nicene Council, and that the decision of that council has been received by the church of Rome, is certain and indisputable. The bishop, if it so please him, may term such worship *relative*: but it is not, on that account, the less idolatrous. When the image of Christ is worshipped, let the matter be disguised as it may, that image is worshipped with the identical worship that is rendered to Christ himself. Thus evidently speaks the second Council of Nice: and thus its decision was rightly understood and explained by James Naclantus.

In fact, by no dexterity of evasion can it be *otherwise* understood. ‘We adore,’ say the Nicene fathers, ‘the unpolluted image of our Lord Jesus Christ our true God: and, when we adore the image, we adore in it the person of him whom it represents.’ What then is the worship rendered to the image? Clearly it is the identical worship which is rendered to Christ. I admit that the image is worshipped, *because* it is deemed a representation of God incarnate; just as the image of Jupiter was worshipped, *because* it was deemed a representation of Jupiter himself: but still the image *is* worshipped; and, let that worship be relative or positive, the worship in question is identical with the worship rendered to God incarnate.

* Arnob. adv. Gent. lib. vi. p. 103. See also Clementin. Homil. x. § 21.

Let the bishop shift and explain as he will, this is the point to which we shall always be ultimately conducted: and, so long as the second Nicene Council is the standard of Latin orthodoxy, James of Clugium must ever be esteemed an honest and consistent expositor.

With the Scripture in their hands, it is really marvellous, how the Nicene fathers could have dared to establish idolatry, and to disfranchise the genuine seventh ecumenical council which had expressly condemned this horrible abomination.*

‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of that which is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the

* The language of the Nicene fathers is so extraordinary, that it ought not to be withheld from our English laity.

‘The venerable images, both of the dispensation of our Lord Jesus Christ as he became man for our salvation, and of our unpolluted lady the holy mother of God, and of the god-like angels, and of the holy apostles and prophets and martyrs, and all the saints, I salute and embrace and adore, according to their just degrees of honour, rejecting and anathematizing, from my whole soul and intellect, that synod, which was congregated through madness and folly, and which has been denominated the Seventh Council: though, by persons who think rightly, it is lawfully and canonically styled a false synod, as being alienated from all truth and piety, and as having rashly and boldly and atheistically barked against the heaven-delivered ecclesiastical legislation, and as having insulted the holy and venerable images, and as having commanded them to be removed from the holy churches of God—Anathema to the calumniators of Christians! Anathema to the breakers of images! Anathema to those who apply to images the scriptural denunciations against idols! Anathema to those who refuse to salute the holy and venerable images! Anathema to those who call the holy images idols! Anathema to those who aid and abet the dishonourers of the holy images!’—*Concil. Nicen. secund. act. i. Labb. Concil. Sacros. vol. vii. p. 56, 57.*

The atheistical council, upon which all these curses are imputed, and upon which all this torrent of rancorous abuse is poured, was guilty of no crime, save that of scripturally condemning gross idolatry. To have a full conception of the mystery of iniquity, a person ought, like myself, to have perused the acts of the second Nicene Council.

‘earth. *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.*’*

Where, in the awful word of Jehovah thundering from Mount Sinai, is there any idle distinction between relative worship and positive worship? In the book of God I read not such vain subtilties: their existence was never dreamed of in the ancient church of Israel. The command is *positive, explicit, universal*. If the wisdom of the Lord hath made no exceptions, shall the puny dexterity of quibbling schoolmen dare authoritatively to propound them, and under an anathema to enforce them upon the catholic church of Christ? If God hath spoken unlimitedly, shall a presumptuous council dare to set limits to his decision? The adoration of images is enjoined by the second Nicene Council, in express opposition to the sound and scriptural determination of its immediate Constantinopolitan predecessor: and this adoration, lamentable to say, is justified and vindicated by a Latin prelate of the nineteenth century, to whose general excellence report bears ample testimony. Yet *all* adoration of images is straitly prohibited by that jealous God, who is the sovereign Lord both of heaven and of earth. From one end of the Bible to the other, not a hint is breathed of the bishop’s vain distinction between relative worship and positive worship. The adoration of images, under *any* pretence, is *altogether* forbidden. ‘*Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.*’

IV. Notwithstanding the decision of the second Council of Nice, and the approved comment of James Naclantus, the bishop esteems the apprehensions of protestants, relative to the mischief which may flow from image-worship, to be purely chimerical.†

Neither his own statement of its alleged principle, nor absolute matter of fact, will allow me to adopt his opinion.

1. The extreme danger attendant upon the unholy

* Exod. xx. 4, 5.

† Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 359.

practice, in the case of recent converts from paganism, he himself, very fully, though perhaps not very discreetly, allows.

According to his own confession, image-worship bears such an unhappy resemblance to pagan idolatry, that it were easy for recent converts to mistake the one for the other. On this ground he is willing to account for the otherwise unaccountable conduct of the ancient Council of Elvira, which strictly forbade images and pictures to be introduced into churches: and, on the same ground, he inclines to explain the extraordinary though acknowledged fact, that *the apostles and their early successors did not adopt the adoration of images*. These primitive and holy men, if we may credit his lordship, had no unseemly dislike to image-worship *in the abstract*: but they thought it prudent, *in their own particular case*, to abstain from the practice, because they reasonably dreaded lest the new converts from paganism, should mistake orthodox Christian image-worship for unorthodox heathen idolatry.*

Whether the true reason of the fact be assigned, may admit of some dispute. The **FACT ITSELF**, that *the apostles and their early successors did not worship images*, I agree with the bishop in esteeming most certain.†

2. But, whatever danger of a mistake there might

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 350.

† The use of images, however, though they certainly were not worshipped by *the apostles*, was at least of *apostolic antiquity*: yet I doubt whether this circumstance will much benefit the cause which has been espoused by the bishop. We learn from Irenæus and Epiphanius, that the Gnostics, who flourished in the age of the apostles, worshipped with misplaced devotion both pictures and images of Christ. The manufacturer of these sacred implements is said to have been Pontius Pilate. Whether from this circumstance they were conceived to derive any peculiar sanctity, we are not informed. Be that as it may, image-worship seems to have been first associated with Christianity by the Gnostics, and from them to have been adopted as a most sound and edifying practice by the fathers of the second Nicene Council.—Iren. adv. Hær. lib. i. c. 24. § 9. Epiph. adv. Hær. lib. i. hær. 27.

be in the case of new converts from paganism, his lordship, in full accordance with the Council of Trent, deems the matter quite altered, when, by lapse of time, the place of new converts shall have been supplied by those more experienced believers, whom the Spaniards denominate *old Christians*. Pagan idolatry having altogether ceased to exist, image-worship now becomes, not only exempt from all danger, but even in a very high degree useful and edifying. For, since Christianity has reigned among us during so many ages; and since, from their earliest childhood, the faithful learn to put no trust in images, and to ask from them no favour; there cannot possibly be any danger in the use of such implements.*

(1.) In the latter part of this defence, even on the supposition of its containing an accurate statement, there seems to be a very singular species of inconsistency.

According to the bishop, *the faithful, from their earliest childhood, learn to put no trust in images, and to ask from them no favour.*

Now, if this statement be accurate, it is impossible to refrain from asking, Where then can be the benefit or utility of adoring images? The second Nicene Council curses all persons who refuse to worship such puppets: and James Naclantus declares, that the faithful worship, not only *before* each imitative image, but even each imitative image *itself*; adoring the image with the self-same adoration that is rendered to its prototype. Yet the bishop of Aire assures us, that, *from their earliest childhood, they learn to put no trust in images, and to ask from them no favour.* Truly, if this be the case, the adoration of images, as prescribed by the second Nicene Council, and as practised by the members of the church of Rome, seems to be a most unaccountably unreasonable service. Our Latin brethren are required, under the

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 351.

pain of a curse, to worship images: nevertheless, if we may credit the bishop of Aire, they are carefully taught that this adoration will do them no manner of good; for *they learn, from their earliest childhood, to put no trust in them, and to ask no favour from them.*

Certainly, the learned prelate, in his zeal to defend his church from the imputation of idolatry, inadvertently charges her with an almost incredible measure of fatuity. The worship of images she strenuously enforces: but its total inutility she diligently inculcates. Images, indeed, we must adore; but then we must put no trust in them, and ask from them no favour.

(2.) It may be doubted, however, whether the bishop's statement be perfectly accurate: it may be doubted, whether the second Nicene Council, when it enjoined the adoration of images, meant to teach that we can derive no benefit from the practice.

The following specimens, at least, of Romish devotion, extracted from the book of the Hours of the Virgin, for the use of the church of Salisbury, as printed at Paris in the year 1526, do not seem quite exactly to accord with the bishop's statement of the matter.

'To all them that be in a state of grace, who devoutly say this prayer before our blessed Lady of pity, she will shew them her blessed visage, and warn them of the day and hour of death: and, in their last end, the angels of God shall yield their souls to heaven. Such a person shall obtain five hundred years, and so many lents of pardon, granted by five holy fathers, popes of Rome.

'Our holy father, Sixtus the fourth, pope, hath granted to all them that devoutly say this prayer before the image of our Lady, the sum of eleven thousand years of pardon.

'These be the fifteen Oo's, which the holy virgin St. Bridget was wont to say daily before the holy rood in St. Paul's church at Rome. Whoso says

‘this a whole year, shall deliver fifteen souls of his
‘next kindred out of purgatory, and shall convert
‘other fifteen sinners to a good life: and other fifteen
‘righteous men of his kind shall persevere in a good
‘life: and, what ye desire of God, ye shall have it, if
‘it be to the salvation of your souls.

‘To all them that before this image of pity shall
‘devoutly say five pater-nosters, and five ave-maries,
‘and a credo, piteously beholding those arms of
‘Christ’s passion, are granted thirty-two thousand
‘seven hundred and fifty-five years of pardon: and
‘Sixtus the fourth, pope of Rome, hath made the
‘fourth and fifth prayer, and hath doubled his afore-
‘said pardon.’*

I am unable to reconcile the privileges thus devoutly
granted to the worshippers of images, with the asser-
tion of the bishop of Aire, that *the faithful learn,
from their very childhood, to put no trust in them,
and to ask from them no favour.* At all events, if
his lordship’s casuistry be able to draw some subtle
line of distinction, I greatly fear, that to all plain un-
lettered persons the line will be altogether invisible.
No man ever did, or ever will, adore an image, with-
out putting his trust in that image, and without ex-
pecting to receive some favour from it.†

* Hor. B. Mariæ Virg. ad usum Sarum. Paris. 1526, fol. 38, 42,
50, 54. apud Bp. Burnet’s Hist. of the Reform. vol. ii. p. 138,
139.

† It is denied by the bishop of Aire, that the Latins, after the
fashion of the old pagans, suppose their images to be the recep-
tacles or dwelling-places of the persons whom they represent.

His lordship means, I presume, that no such doctrine has been
formally promulgated by the church of Rome. This may very
possibly be the case: but, unless, *in matter of fact*, the doctrine
had long and generally prevailed, it is impossible to account for
the extraordinary notions which have been entertained relative
to the consecrated images and pictures. Legends exist, in which
we are taught, that the images of the Virgin have spoken, that
they have sung, that they have soared in the air like birds, that
they have rolled their eyes, that they have sweat blood, that
they have been transmuted into flesh, that they have wept and

(3.) The bishop, however, is quite sure, that, where christianity has been long established, image-worship

lamented and groaned.—Jurieu's *Contin.* chap. xiv. Such circumstances are gravely asserted to have taken place even within our own memory: for we are assured, that, at Rome, in the year 1796, pictures of Madonnas opened and shut their eyes, images of saints altered their position; and crucifixes moved their eyelids.—Zouch on the *Proph.* p. 180. Exactly the same alleged circumstances originally introduced and sanctioned the practice of image-worship. 'At first, the experiment was made with caution and scruple: and the venerable pictures were discreetly allowed to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the cold, and to gratify the prejudices of the heathen proselytes. By a slow though inevitable progression, the honours of the original were transferred to the copy: the devout christian prayed before the image of a saint: and the pagan rites of genuflexion, luminaries, and incense, again stole into the catholic church. The scruples of reason or piety were silenced by the strong evidence of visions and miracles: and the pictures, which speak and move and bleed, must be endowed with a divine energy, and may be considered as the proper object of religious adoration.—*Gibbon's Hist. of Decline*, vol. ix. chap. 49, p. 115.

These pretended miracles were doubtless mere tricks, performed by the priests through the agency of springs and wires: for the imposture was discovered, when, with other similar images, the crucifix of Boxley, which had been observed to bow, and to lift itself up, and to stir its head and hands and feet, and to roll its eyes, and to move its lips, and to bend its brow, was publicly broken in pieces, at St. Paul's cross, for the purpose of disabusing the long-deceived people.—*Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation*. Book III. vol. i. p. 232. Doubtless these pretended miracles were mere juggling tricks; and the bishop believes their divinity no more than I do: but still I perceive not, how such tricks and such legends could ever have come into existence, had not some vague superstitious notion prevailed, that the puppets were animated by the spirit of the persons whom they severally purported to represent. The very existence of the tricks and the legends demonstratively proves, against the bishop of Aire, the existence of the notion. For, assuredly, no person would contrive such tricks and manufacture such legends, who did not wish to impress and confirm the belief, that the consecrated images, like those of the ancient pagans, were the receptacles or dwelling-places of the persons whom they represent. The notions, attached by the pagans to the image of Minerva, exactly correspond with those, which have been attached by the Latins to the image of the Virgin. Compare Virgil. *Æneid*. lib. ii. ver. 171—175, with Tasso's *Gerus. Liberat.* cant. ii.

can never lead to idolatry; though, in recently-converted countries, the circumstance may easily occur.

Such language, even in its very construction, is singularly paradoxical, not to say contradictory. I am perfectly aware, that the second Nicene Council anathematizes all those persons, who presume to apply the name of *idols* to the images which it requires us to adore: but if, contrary to the second commandment, a statue be worshipped, I see not how the nature of the *deed* can be changed, by the mere *verbal* expedient of calling the statue an *image* rather than an *idol*. St. Paul knew nothing of the distinction, which has been set up by the Nicene fathers and by the church of Rome after them. With him, *the worship of an image* was the same as *the worship of an idol*:* and so, in the judgment of plain common sense, it must always be. Hence, to say, that *in long-christianized countries image worship can never lead to idolatry*, is a palpable contradiction: for image-worship and idolatry are identical.

The opinion of Pope Gregory the great, as to the identity of image-worship and idolatry, corresponds with the opinion of St. Paul: but then it must be confessed that both Paul and Gregory flourished *before* the fathers of the second Nicene Council.

According to the bishop of Aire, image-worship can never lead old-established christians into idolatry. Pope Gregory was of a different opinion: and, unhappily, he was borne out by facts.

Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, finding it impossible to prevent his people from worshipping the images which had been unadvisedly set up in the churches, forthwith, like a faithful and vigilant pastor, brake the contemptible puppets in pieces. For this action he was censured by Pope Gregory: not, however, on the ground, that the people had *not* committed idolatry, *for THIS was most fully allowed by the Ro-*

* See Rom. i. 23.

man prelate; but on the totally different ground, that images might be employed as a useful mean of conveying instruction to the illiterate, though any worship of them ought to be strictly prohibited.*

* Gregor. Epist. lib. ix. Epist. 105. lib. xi. Epist. 13. aliter 9. Oper. vol. ii. Paris. 1705. The bishop of Aire's representation of this matter varies considerably from my own. His lordship exhibits Serenus as only anxious to *prevent* that idolatry which he thought very probably *would* take place: whereas, upon a careful inspection of the original, it appears to me, that the idolatry actually *had* taken place, and that Serenus brake the images *on that very account*. See Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 353: That the public may judge between us, I annex the identical statements of Gregory himself.

I. Gregorius Sereno Episc. Massil. Quod fraternitati vestræ tam sera scripta transmittimus, non hoc torpori, sed occupationi, deputate. Latorem vero præsentium dilectissimum filium Cyriacum, monasterii patrem, vobis in omnibus commendamus, ut nulla hunc in Massiliensi civitate mora detineat, sed ad fratrem cœpiscopum nostrum Syagrium, cum sanctitatis vestræ solatio, Deo protegente, proficiscatur. Præterea indico dudum ad nos pervenisse, quod fraternitas vestra, QUOSDAM IMAGINUM ADORATORES ASPICIENS, easdem in ecclesiis imagines confregit atque projecit. *Et quidem zelum vos, ne quid manufactum adorari posset, habuisse laudavimus*; sed frangere easdem imagines non debuisse, indicamus. Idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi, qui literas nesciunt, saltem in parietibus videndo, legant quæ legere in codicibus non valent. Tua ergo fraternitas, et illas servare, et *ab earum adoratu populum prohibere*, debuit: quatenus et literarum nescii haberent unde scientiam historię colligerent, et *populus in picturæ adoratione minime peccaret*. Gregor. Epist. lib. ix. epist. 105.

II. Gregorius Sereno Episc. Massil. Convocandi sunt dispersi Ecclesiæ filii, eisque Scripturæ sacræ est testimoniis ostendendum, *quia omne manufactum adorari non licet*; quoniam scriptum est: *Dominum Deum tuum adorabis, et illi soli serves*. Ac deinde subiungendum, quia picturas imaginum, quæ ad ædificationem imperiti populi fuerant factæ, ut, nescientes literas, ipsam historiam intendentes, quid actum sit discerent. QUIA TRANSISSE IN ADORATIONEM VIDERAS, IDCIRCO COMMOTUS ES, UT EAS IMAGINES FRANGI PRÆCIPERES. Atque eisdem dicendum: si ad hanc instructionem, ad quam imagines antiquitus factæ sunt, habere vultis in ecclesia, eas modis omnibus et fieri et haberi permitto. Atque indica, quod non tibi ipsa visio historię, quæ pictura teste pendebatur, displicuerit: SED ILLA ADORATIO, QUÆ PICTURIS FUEBAT INCOMPETENTER EXHIBITA. Atque, in his verbis eorum mentes demulcens, eos ad concordiam tuam revoca. Et, si quis ima-

Now I cannot find, that the Massilians did any thing more, than what was subsequently commanded by the second Nicene Council, which the bishop of Aire stands pledged to obey. Images were originally introduced into churches, on the plea of their aiding devotion in the capacity of mere instructive memorials. This use of images soon led to their being worshipped: and, by Serenus and Gregory, such worship was pronounced to be idolatry. Thus stood the matter at the close of the sixth century: thus also was image-worship viewed, in the year 754, by the Council of Constantinople. But, when the second Nicene Council sat in the year 787, the worship of images was made to assume a totally different aspect. The act of the Massilians, which Serenus and Gregory had *prohibited* as manifestly idolatrous, was *vindicated* and *sanctioned* and *enjoined*, under pain of an anathema, by the Nicene fathers. Between *image-worship* and *idolatry*, the more ancient doctors could perceive no difference: but the Nicene fathers threw quite a new light on the subject, by pronouncing that

gines facere voluerit, minime prohibe: adorari vero imagines omnibus modis veta. Sed hoc sollicitè fraternitas tua admoneat, ut ex visione rei gestæ ardorem compunctionis percipiant, et in adoratione solius omnipotentis sanctæ Trinitatis humiliter prosternantur. Gregor. Epist. lib. xi. epist. 13. aliter 9.

The extract from the latter of these epistles is chronologically posterior to the former of them, and in fact refers to it. One might think the language sufficiently plain: I subjoin, however, the bishop's comment in his own words.

Ecoutez, je vous prie, Monsieur, ce qu' écrivoit un grand pape à un évêque de Marseille, qui par un zèle inconsidéré avoit brisé les images des saints, sous le prétexte qu'il ne faut pas les adorer. Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 353.

The English laic correspondent of the bishop has most probably never opened the works of Pope Gregory. It may be doubted, whether his lordship will have given him a very distinct idea of the transaction.

I beg to make my acknowledgments to my friends Dr. Ellerton and Mr. Crowe, for the trouble which they kindly took in making the above extracts, in the original Latin, from the works of Pope Gregory in the Bodleian library.

a worshipped image was something totally distinct from *a worshipped idol*.

The bishop of Aire will perhaps say with Pope Gregory the second, that images are the representations of Christ and his saints, while idols are the representations of pagan divinities: whence he may argue, that, between the worship of the former and the worship of the latter, there is a marked and essential difference.

So may the bishop argue: but he will not, on that account, the more agree with Pope Gregory the first. The images, worshipped by the Massilians in their churches, were representations, not of the pagan gods, but of Christ and the Virgin and the saints; yet this identical *image-worship*, which was afterwards *enjoined* by the Nicene fathers under pain of an anathema, was confessed by Gregory the first to be *idolatry*; and, on that precise ground, was *prohibited*.

But, contends the bishop of Aire, image-worship can never lead old-established Christians into idolatry.

The bishop is perfectly in the right, provided only we can admit, that the nature of an *action* can be totally altered by a change of *nomenclature*. Here, however, lies the difficulty: and, notwithstanding all that his lordship has said on the subject, protestants, I apprehend, will still continue to think, with Sere-nus and Gregory the great, that the very *act* of worshipping an image, as that act is enjoined by the second Council of Nice, inevitably causes the worshipped image to become an idol. As for *denying* that images ought to be worshipped, no member of the Romish church can take such a step without flatly contradicting the second Nicene Council, and thereby confessing himself to be an accursed heretic.

V. According to his wont, the bishop of Aire attempts to strengthen his cause by the authority of the fathers.

Whom then of the fathers does he adduce? Truly he adduces none save those, who flourished at a com-

paratively late period, when the innovation of image-worship had doubtless been introduced into the church, though by no means with universal consent.

Why did he not cite the two Clements, and Polycarp, and Ignatius, and Justin, and Athenagoras?*

* If the bishop does not cite *those* ancient fathers, he at least cites Tertullian as an advocate of image-worship, and as an unexceptionable witness of its early-approved existence in the Christian church.

Tertullian, it must be confessed, though less ancient than Clement of Rome and Polycarp and Ignatius and Justin and Athenagoras, flourished toward the close of the second century and at the beginning of the third century: yet, notwithstanding his antiquity, I doubt whether the bishop will find him a very effective ally.

This father speaks of christians having cups ornamentally embossed with the parable of the lost sheep. The bishop chooses to consider these cups as being the sacramental chalices. I will not undertake to contradict him: because, in truth, Tertullian says *nothing* as to their precise character. They *may* therefore have been, and probably enough *were*, sacramental chalices. But what then? Because these sacramental chalices (we will say) were adorned, in embossed work, or possibly in enamel, with the very appropriate parable of the lost sheep: have we here any proof, that either Tertullian or his contemporaries were addicted to image-worship?

That the reader may be enabled to form a correct judgment of the bishop's criticism, I subjoin, what his lordship has omitted, the precise words of Tertullian.

A parabolis licebit incipias, ubi est ovis perdita a domino requisita et humeris ejus reventa. Procedant ipsæ picturæ calicum vestrorum. Tertull. de Pudic. Oper. p. 748.

In this narrow space lies the bishop's entire demonstration, that Tertullian was an advocate of image-worship.

But, in reality, while he thus cites Tertullian as an authority, he destroys by his own hand the evidence which he had laboured to extract from that father. Though the christians of that period, if we may believe the bishop, were undoubted image-worshippers, still they possessed not any images: and his lordship apologizes for the acknowledged fact of *their not having images*, on the ground, that, in their persecuted and uncertain condition, they could not easily carry such articles along with them.

The sanctity and efficacy of an image depends not, I presume, upon its *magnitude*. If the christians of the second age had affected such *manufactures*, as Pope Gregory calls them, they might easily have fashioned portable images of no greater size

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He himself incidentally informs us, *The apostles and their early successors knew nothing of image-worship.* Hence it were vain labour to seek a non-entity in the writings of the primitive fathers.

than a chalice. The bishop's apology, however, is altogether built upon the indisputable fact, that *these alleged image-worshippers had, after all, no images.* Certainly, his lordship's demonstration of the image-worship of the second age is not a little paradoxical.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Difficulties of Romanism in respect to the Adoration of the Cross.

A DISCUSSION of the worship of images finally conducts the bishop of Aire to a defence of the adoration of the cross.*

'After so many subjects of dispute,' says his lordship to the English layman, 'it is, in truth, a lamentable circumstance, that, between us and you, there should still remain a difficulty to be surmounted. On the one hand, I am reduced to ask of you the reason of those injuries which are offered to the cross of my Saviour: and, on the other hand, I find it necessary to justify before christians those honours which we render to that distinctive badge of Christianity. I have traversed your country in all directions: and I have never perceived in any part of it the consolatory sign, which advertises a christian stranger that he is travelling in a country of brethren. Your reformation has not spared the cross: every where has it cast that holy symbol to the ground. Would it be deemed incompatible with the cross: or has it acted under the often-confuted pretext of superstition and idolatry? Has England then forgotten, that she was delivered from idolatry by the cross, and that her first apostles came with that sacred standard in their hand to liberate her from her errors and her idols? You will tell me, that England has not forgotten the cross; for she still retains it in the administration of baptism. Much honour, in good sooth, do you confer upon the cross! Nothing remained, save to exclude,

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xvii.

‘from the sacrament which makes us christians, the sign by which we show that we are christians. And yet let us thank the divine mercy, that it has not been altogether obliterated among you. Perhaps the use of the cross in baptism, which you still retain, may eventually lead you to re-establish it in the credit and honours of which your ancestors have so unjustly despoiled it.’*

I. In prosecuting this subject, it will be useful, for the purpose of ascertaining the ground upon which we really stand, to resort to the authoritative declaration of the second Nicene Council.

‘When we salute the life-giving cross,’ says the Constantinopolitan patriarch Tarasius, in the seventh action of that famous synod, ‘we all sing with united voices, the following hymn:—

‘Thy cross, O Lord, we adore: and we adore the spear, which pierced the vivifying side of thy goodness.’†

II. The second Council of Nice, then, has received and decreed the adoration of the cross. Hence the bishop of Aire stands pledged, either to defend such adoration, or to censure the decision of an acknowledged ecumenical council. The latter could not be done without incurring the guilt of heretical pravity: the former, consequently, was, without hesitation, preferred.

1. In performance of the task, thus imposed upon him by the Nicene fathers, his lordship has entered into a discussion respecting the purport of the word *adoration*: and he has doubtless shewn, that both in the Hebrew and in the Greek, the term bears the two-fold sense of *religious worship* and *civil homage*.

This criticism, though not altogether new (for the patriarch Tarasius had entered into something of the

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 372, 373.

† Concil. Nicen. Secund. act. vii. Labb. Concil. Sacros. vol. vii. p. 584.

same line of argument), is at least very just: but I do not distinctly perceive its bearing upon the *present* question.

In which of the two senses does the bishop propose that we should adore the cross?

If, in the sense of *religious worship*; he inculcates idolatry: if, in the sense of *civil homage*; he recommends an absurdity.

Scripture recognises only these two senses of the term: and, how either of them can benefit his lordship's cause, I am unable to discern.

In a word, the precise nature of the adoration of the cross, vindicated by the bishop, is left, so far as I can see, altogether undefined. He would be angry, I presume, were we to call it *religious adoration*: and he would accuse us of dealing in unseemly ridicule, were we to pronounce it *civil homage*, such as is paid to the worshipful chief magistrate of a respectable borough. Yet neither the Greek nor the Hebrew Scriptures recognise any other than these two senses of the word *adoration*.

2. The bishop produces against us that well-known text of St. Paul: 'God forbid that I should glory, *'save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'**

I cannot discern the relevancy of its production. St. Paul, I apprehend, is not here speaking of the material timber whereon our Lord suffered; for I am not aware, that we have any scriptural authority to esteem the mere wood of the cross more sacred than any other piece of mere wood: but, by a very common figure of rhetoric, so far from blushing at the ignominious death of his Saviour, he professes himself even to glory in the despised circumstance of his crucifixion. This circumstance, as a matter of disgrace and obloquy, the bishop well knows to have been perpetually cast in the teeth of the early christians both by the Jews and by the pagans. To their vitu-

* Galat. vi. 14.

peration, the apostle clearly alludes: and, in return, with a lofty spirit of holy superiority, he exclaims; 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of 'our Lord Jesus Christ.' So spake St. Paul: and so thinks every member of the Anglican church.

3. It is contended, however, by the bishop, that there must be some extraordinary efficacy, either in the bare wood of the cross, or even in the mere act of making the sign of the cross: and, as a proof of this position, he alleges, that, by the power of the latter, the old pagan oracles were reduced to silence.

I venture to doubt the fact: both because I have never seen any sufficient evidence for it; and because, from the nature of the gospel, it strikes me as a matter altogether incredible. That the juggling oracles of paganism were gradually and naturally silenced by the successful propagation of the gospel, I fully believe: but, as for any specific oracle being instantaneously reduced to silence by the mere circumstance of some christian making the sign of the cross, I profess myself quite incredulous.

4. As usual, the bishop resorts to antiquity: and, as usual, he carefully shuns the *really* primitive fathers, Clement and Ignatius and Polycarp and Justin. What he actually *does* adduce, proves either too much or too little for his purpose.

(1.) Julian reproached the degenerate christians of the fourth century with adoring the material timber of the cross; while they inconsistently, as he thought, refused to worship the buckler which had fallen from heaven: and the replication of his learned antagonist, Cyril of Alexandria, who flourished in the fifth century, more closely resembles the retort courteous than the honest and explicit denial.

'Would you have us reject the cross whence we derive our recollection of all virtue, to entertain our children and our women with your idle mythological stories?'

Such is the strain in which Cyril proceeds through

more than three folio pages of eloquent declamation relative to Ganymede and Alcmena and Semele and Amymone and Daphne and Venus: for the bishop has epitomized him with perfect fairness.

Now, so far as I can understand the principles of sound reasoning, this does not strike me as being a satisfactory answer to the charge preferred by the imperial apostate.

‘You christians adore the material timber of the ‘cross,’ says Julian, who, having himself been once a christian, well knew the doctrines and practices of the age. ‘What if we adore the cross,’ replies Cyril; ‘we had better do that, than read lectures upon pagan mythology.’

This may be a very fair retort: but I cannot perceive in it any reply to the allegation of the emperor. Cyril rambles, from the diopetic buckler, to the practice of signing with the cross both inanimate houses and human foreheads; and, from the impure loves of the heathen deities, he passes to the great efficacy of the cross in awakening holy recollections: but he carefully shuns the distinct and precise charge of Julian: from beginning to end, he never once denies the alleged fact, that, *the cross was idolatrously worshipped*. Under the circumstances in which Cyril was placed, a non-denial amounts to an acknowledgment.*

(2.) The cross then seems to have been actually worshipped with religious adoration about the middle of the fourth century: and, if such authority be of any use to the bishop, I wish not to deprive him of it.

As for the practice of signing the forehead with the cross, it clearly was very common in the time of Tertullian, who flourished at the latter end of the second, and at the beginning of the third, century.

To the simple use of this ceremony in baptism, for

* Cyril. Alex. cont. Julian. lib. vi. p. 194—198.

the purpose of merely setting forth the solemn consecration of the neophyte to the service of his crucified Redeemer, no sober person will object: but the case is very different with that perpetual superstitious crucifixion, let a man's business be what it may, which the Latin church so strongly recommends to her disciples. The custom, I acknowledge, had been introduced even as early as the days of Tertullian: but, from the evident peevishness of that father when asked for a scriptural proof of its obligation, I suspect that it was disliked and opposed by many who very rationally wished to take the Bible as their standard of religious duty.*

(3.) If Cyril of Alexandria prove too much for the bishop, as Tertullian certainly proves too little; the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, whom he also cites, may perhaps stand him in somewhat better stead.

Minucius lived about the year 220; and the bishop claims him as an ally: yet his lordship's mode of dealing with this author may well be thought not a little extraordinary.

In the work of Minucius, the pagan Cecilius objects to the christian Octavius, the adoration of Christ and his cross. Octavius, in reply, acknowledges the adoration of Christ: but, as for crosses, he explicitly and readily denies, that christians either adored them, or even wished to adore them.†

One might have thought, that nothing could be more intractable than such evidence as this: but the bishop does not despair of moulding it according to his wishes. He takes upon himself to interpret Octavius as meaning to say, that christians adore not *all* crosses *indiscriminately*; the crosses, for instance, on which the two thieves were executed: but that they certainly *do* adore those which are made in imitation of the true cross.

* Tertull. de Coron. Mil. § iii. Oper. p. 449.

† Minuc. Fel. Octav. p. 280, 284. Ouzel. Lugdun. Batav. 1672.

To such a gloss upon a very plain passage I need scarcely point out the sufficiently evident objection. Even to say nothing of the total silence of Octavius respecting *any* adoration of Christ's cross, the gloss, proposed by the bishop, is utterly irreconcilable with the context. Cecilius alleges, that christians adored Christ and *his* cross, *in particular*. Now, to this precise allegation, a mere denial, that christians adored the crosses of *all* malefactors *in general*, were plainly no answer: for it were nugatory to deny a matter which had never been charged upon them. The crosses, therefore, mentioned by Octavius in his reply, can only be material imitations of the true cross of Christ, then apparently beginning to be introduced into churches: and 'these imitative crosses,' says Octavius, 'we neither adore nor wish to adore.'*

III. It is interesting to contrast the rapid and explicit denial of Octavius with the rambling answer, void of *any* denial, which Cyril of Alexandria gives to the Emperor Julian: and I apprehend, that these three several authorities, which have been adduced by the bishop himself, will throw a strong light upon the gradual progress of the staurolatrous superstition.

The *earliest* fathers, as the bishop tacitly confesses by the circumstance of his never citing them, knew nothing of any veneration either of the material cross, or of the sign of the cross. But the waning church did not long continue in this happy state of scriptural ignorance. Most probably, from the natural and significant rite of imprinting the cross upon the forehead in the administration of baptism, the practice of those perpetual crucisignations, which are mentioned by Tertullian, originated. The custom was not very

* When the meaning of a passage is disputed, it is always the most fair to give the words of the original.

Nam quod religioni nostræ hominem noxium et crucem ejus adscribitis, longe de vicinia veritatis erratis; qui putatis Deum credi, aut meruisse noxium, aut potuisse terrenum—Cruces nec colimus, nec optamus. Minuc. Fel. Octav. p. 280, 284.

wise: but, at all events, it was not absolutely criminal. That it involved no adoration of the cross, is quite clear from the direct testimony of Minucius Felix. But superstition is never stationary. According to Julian, christians, about the middle of the fourth century, adored the material timber of the cross. That Julian meant *religious adoration*, and not mere *civil homage*, is perfectly evident: and that Cyril *understood* him so to mean, is no less evident. Yet Cyril did not venture to contradict the taunting emperor.

How then stands the matter, according to the evidence produced by the bishop himself? It stands, if I mistake not, in manner following:—

At the beginning of the third century, the charge of worshipping the cross, as we learn from Minucius Felix, was ignorantly brought against the christians of that period, and by them was instantaneously and unambiguously repelled.

In the course of the fifth century, Cyril of Alexandria could give no denial to an exactly similar charge, which had been brought by Julian against the christian church of the middle of the fourth century.

Nothing affords a more distinct idea of the progress of superstition, than a scrupulous accuracy in the specification of dates.

BOOK II.

THE DIFFICULTIES ATTENDANT UPON THE CHURCH OF ROME, IN REGARD TO HER CLAIM OF UNIVERSAL SUPREMACY.

Fundata est Ecclesia super petram, unde Petrus nomen accepit. Non enim à Petro petra, sed Petrus à petrâ: sicut non Christus à Christiano, sed Christianus à Christo, vocatur. Ideo quippe ait Dominus; *Super hanc petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam*: quia dixerat Petrus; *Tu es Christus filius Dei vivi*. Super hanc ergo, inquit, petram, quam confessus es, ædificabo Ecclesiam meam. Petra enim erat Christus, super quod fundamentum etiam ipse ædificatus est Petrus. *Fundamentum*, quippe, aliud nemo potest ponere, præter id quod positum est; quod est Christus Jesus.—*August. Expos. in Evân. Johan. Tract. cxxiv. Oper. vol. ix. p. 206.*

Ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οὐκ ἔπιν, Ἐπὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ. Ὅντι γὰρ ἐπὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν πίστιν τὴν ἰαυτοῦ, ἐκκλησίαι ᾠκοδομήσι. Τὶ δὲ ἦν ἡ πίστις; Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος.—*Chrysost. Serm. de Pentecost Oper. vol. vi. p. 233. Lutet. Paris. 1624.*

CHAPTER I.

Respecting the Polity of the Primitive Church.

AT the time of the reformation in England, the spiritual administration of the church was vested in the three orders, denominated *bishops, priests* and *deacons*: and the ground of this arrangement was, that such, from the very beginning, had been the polity of the primitive church.

Respecting the divine origin of that particular form of ecclesiastical government, which, from its chief officer, bears the name of *episcopacy*, I am not about to produce a regular dissertation. The matter lies within a very narrow compass. To demonstrate, that *this polity was of no mere human appointment*, I require nothing more than the Bible, illustrated by the attestation of two of the oldest fathers to A NAKED MATTER OF FACT.

The study of the old ecclesiastical writers will not, as the bishop of Aire imagines, conduct us of necessity to Rome: but, without (I trust) making us firebrands and bigots, it will be very apt, if pursued with real candour and love of truth, to convert us into what is sometimes called *high churchmen*. From its abuse, this term may perhaps, in the present day of capricious innovation and unlearned neglect of antiquity, have become, with many, a sort of bugbear: nevertheless, when rightly understood, the term is, after all, a very good term. In its genuine acceptation, it simply implies *a love of Christian unity through an instrumental medium appointed by the wisdom of the Lord himself*.

U

I. Between Irenæus and St. John, there exists only the single link of Polycarp. Irenæus was the scholar of Polycarp; and Polycarp was the disciple of St. John.

Hence, I apprehend, Irenæus may be viewed as an unexceptionable witness, not only of facts which occurred in his own immediate time, but also of any inseparably connected facts (if such there be) which are alleged to have taken place in the time of the apostles.

Now the **FACT**, which Irenæus mentions as existing in his own time, is *the universal establishment of the episcopate*.

Respecting this **NAKED FACT**, I perceive not how he could have been mistaken. We all know, without a possibility of error, that episcopacy is at this present moment established in England. The fact presents itself to our very eyes: and we are sure, that we cannot be deceived. In a similar manner, Irenæus could not but have known with absolute certainty, what form of ecclesiastical polity universally prevailed at the time when he himself flourished. This form, vouching for a *mere cognizable FACT*, he declares to have been the episcopal.

On the authority, then, of Irenæus, we may be quite certain respecting the **NAKED FACT**, that *in his days the episcopate was universally established*: and from this early **FACT**, (for the personal testimony of Irenæus runs back to within forty years of the death of St. John) we are naturally led to ask, whence that universally-established polity could have originated?

The question is fully answered by the same Irenæus after a manner, which, I think, evinces the moral impossibility of error.

He assures us, that in every church there had been a regular succession of bishops from the time of the apostles: and he himself, as we have observed, was separated from John only by the single intervening

link of Polycarp. To enumerate the successions of all the churches, he remarks, would occupy too much space and time; he confines himself, therefore, as a single specimen of the whole, to the succession of the Roman church. On this topic he is very precise and particular.

The Roman church itself, he tells us, was founded by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul. These inspired ministers of God, having thus jointly founded that church, jointly delivered the episcopate of it to its first bishop Linus, who is mentioned by Paul in his second Epistle to Timothy.* Linus was succeeded by Anacletus; and, after him, in the third degree from the apostles, Clement received the episcopate; which Clement, as Irenæus observes, saw and heard and conferred with the apostles themselves.† Clement was followed by Euaristus; Euaristus, by Alexander; Alexander, by Sixtus; Sixtus, by Telesphorus; Telesphorus, by Hyginus; Hyginus, by Pius; Pius, by Anicetus; Anicetus, by Soter; and Soter, by Eleutherius; who thus, as Irenæus remarks, held, at the precise time when he was writing the sentence, the Roman episcopate in the twelfth degree from the apostles.

To this succession he incidentally subjoins the origination of the episcopate in the church of Smyrna.

At Rome, as we have seen, he vouches for the FACT, that *the episcopate of that city emanated from the two apostles Peter and Paul*; at Smyrna, he vouches for the FACT, that *the episcopate of that city emanated from the apostle John*. He himself was the scholar of Polycarp: and Polycarp had not only been specially the disciple of John, but in his early youth he had received instructions also from the other apostles. By the apostle John, Polycarp was

* 2 Tim. iv. 21.

† See Philip, iv. 3.

appointed bishop of Smyrna:* and he presided in that see for the space of half a century, until he closed his career by martyrdom. Whatever he had learned from the apostles, this venerable man, according to Irenæus, delivered to the church: and the same testimony was borne, by all the churches of Asia and by those who had succeeded Polycarp, down to the time when Irenæus himself was engaged in writing his work against heresies.†

Thus we find, that the closely-connected FACT, for which Irenæus vouches in addition to the FACT which he beheld with his own personal eyes, is *the appointment of the first bishops by the apostles themselves*: nor, when we consider the circumstances under which he was placed, *himself* a bishop the successor of the holy nonagenarian Pothinus, *himself* the disciple of the martyr Polycarp, *himself* in point of actual knowledge reaching within forty years of the death of St. John, is it easy to conceive how he could have been mistaken in the specification of A FACT which must at that time have been a matter of public and universal notoriety.

II. Yet, though Irenæus alone might be deemed sufficient for our purpose, it will be satisfactory to hear the additional testimony of a yet older witness.

Irenæus, it will have been observed, mentions Clement, the friend and fellow-labourer of St. Paul, as being the third bishop of Rome: and he particularizes him by specifying, that, in the name of the Roman church, he wrote most powerful epistles to

* Irenæus loosely says, that Polycarp was appointed bishop of Smyrna by the apostles: but chronology, I believe, will evince, that he must have been so appointed by the apostle John alone. Polycarp suffered martyrdom in the year 147; and he presided in the church of Smyrna during fifty years. Hence he must have been consecrated in the year 97. But, at that time, all the apostles, save John, were dead. This last surviving member of the apostolic college remained, as Irenæus observes, to the time of Trajan. He died in the year 100.

† Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3.

the Corinthians. Of these epistles, some persons, though perhaps with no very sufficient reason, have doubted the genuineness of the second: but none have ever controverted the genuineness of the first. That admirable letter, in every age of the church, has been universally received as the indisputable composition of Clement.

Now, exactly on the same principle that Irenæus is an unexceptionable witness of the FACTS which occurred before his very eyes, Clement also is an unexceptionable witness of the FACTS which occurred to *his* certain personal knowledge. The contemporary of St. Paul, and *himself* (according to Irenæus) the third bishop of Rome, Clement could not but have known, simply as *a matter of FACT*, whether the first bishops of the several churches were, or were not, appointed and consecrated by the apostles; and, if those bishops *were* so appointed and consecrated, he could not but have further known, still simply as *a matter of FACT*, whether the apostles so appointed and consecrated them merely to serve a temporary purpose of expediency, or whether they acted thus under a yet higher authority and with a view to an irrevocable system of ecclesiastical polity.

All this, simply as *a matter of FACT*, Clement, the companion and fellow-labourer of St. Paul, could not but have known with absolute and perfect certainty: for, if we deny so plain a proposition, we must deny also, that we ourselves are certain, whether there are at present bishops in England, and whether those bishops were consecrated by their predecessors.

1. What, then, says the primitive Clement? Does his testimony agree or disagree with the testimony of Irenæus? Does he limit the institution of the episcopate to the apostles, merely acting, for a brief purpose of expediency, as wise and prudent, but in *this* respect uninspired, men: or does he carry it back to an authority, whence the apostles themselves derived

all the ecclesiastical power which they ever possessed?

Let us hear the holy man, in his own words, deliver his evidence on behalf of a mere naked historical FACT.

‘It will behove us to take care, that, looking into
 ‘the depths of the divine knowledge, *we do all things*
 ‘*in order, whatsoever our Lord hath commanded us*
 ‘*to do*; and, particularly, that we perform our offer-
 ‘ings and service to God, at their appointed seasons:
 ‘for these he hath commanded to be done, not rashly
 ‘and disorderly, but at certain determinate times and
 ‘hours. *Therefore he hath ordained, by his supreme*
 ‘*will and authority, both where, and by what persons,*
 ‘*they are to be performed*: that so all things, being
 ‘piously done unto all well-pleasing, may be accepta-
 ‘ble to him. Hence it is, that they, who make their
 ‘offerings at the appointed seasons, are happy and ac-
 ‘cepted: because that, obeying the commandments
 ‘of the Lord, they are free from sin. And the same
 ‘care must be had of the persons, that minister unto
 ‘him. *For the chief priest has his proper services:*
 ‘*and to the priests their proper place is appointed: and*
 ‘*to the Levites appertain their due ministrations:* and
 ‘the layman is confined within the bounds of what is
 ‘commanded to laymen. Let every one of you,
 ‘therefore, brethren, bless God in his proper station
 ‘with a good conscience and with all gravity, not
 ‘exceeding the rule of his service that is appointed to
 ‘him. *The apostles have preached to us from our*
 ‘*Lord Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ, from God. Christ,*
 ‘*therefore, was sent by God: the apostles by Christ.*
 ‘So both their offices were orderly fulfilled, accord-
 ‘ing to the will of God. For, having received their
 ‘command, and being fully assured by the resurrec-
 ‘tion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and being convinced
 ‘by the word of God and the evidence of the Holy
 ‘Spirit, they went abroad, publishing that the king-
 ‘dom of God was at hand. Thus preaching through

‘countries and cities, and proving by the Spirit the first fruits of their conversions, *they appointed out of them bishops and ministers over such as should afterward believe.* And in truth, *what wonder is it, if they, to whom such a work was committed by God in Christ, established such officers as we before mentioned;* when even that blessed and faithful servant in all his house, Moses, set down in the Holy Scriptures all things that were commanded him. For our apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ, that contentions would arise on account of the ministry. And therefore, having a perfect foreknowledge of this, *they appointed persons, as we have before said; and then gave direction how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry.* Wherefore, we cannot think, that those may justly be thrown out of their ministry, who were either appointed by them, or who were afterward chosen by eminent men with the consent of the whole church.’*

It will be recollected, that I profess only to be concerned with *evidence to FACTS.* What then are the *FACTS*, for which Clement, the friend and contemporary of the apostles, has undertaken to vouch?

He vouches, if I mistake not, in terms which cannot be misunderstood, for the divine institution and the eternal obligation of that form of ecclesiastical polity, which, from its highest order, is usually denominated *episcopal*; he places the institution upon the same divine authority, as the matters ordained by Moses according to the commandment which he received from heaven: he declares, that one great object of the institution was the prevention of schism and disorder; it being the duty of each individual to serve God in his own appointed station, while the episcopate, viewed collectively, serves as a general

* Clem. Roman. Epist. ad. Corinth. i. § 40—44. Abp. Wake’s translation.

centre of union: he specifies, that, as the apostles were ordained of Christ, so they, by his authority, ordained their successors; the same power afterward descending, from generation to generation, down to the very end of time: and he intimates, as well knowing the mind of the inspired apostles from direct personal communication with them, that it was unlawful to eject from their ministry (save, of course, when some unhappy and real necessity demanded their canonical deposition) officers, who had been consecrated either by the apostles themselves or by eminent men their legitimate successors.

2. It has been said by those of our brethren, who, rejecting episcopacy, have adopted the presbyterial form of church-government, that the primitive bishops and presbyters were identical, and that originally there were no more than two degrees in the hierarchy.

I have diligently resorted, not to the works of partisans on either side, but to the genuine monuments of antiquity itself: and I have not observed any evidence for such an opinion.

Irenæus, as we have seen, gives a regular catalogue of the primitive Roman bishops: and he assures us, *merely as a FACT*, that each church in his time possessed a strictly-analogous episcopal succession. With Irenæus in Gaul, perfectly agrees his partial contemporary Tertullian in Africa; for to the self-same named *FACT* he also most unequivocally bears witness.*

* Edant ergo origines ecclesiarum suarum: evolvant ordinem episcoporum suorum, ita per successiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille episcopus aliquem ex apostolis vel apostolicis viris, qui tamen cum apostolis perseveraverit, habuerit autorem et antecessorem. Hoc enim modo ecclesiæ apostolicæ census tuos deferunt: sicut Smyrnæorum ecclesia habens Polycarpum ab Johanne conlocatum refert; sicut Romanorum Clementem à Petro ordinatum edit; proinde utique et cæteræ exhibent, quos, ab apostolis in episcopatum constitutos, apostolici seminis traduces habeant.—Tertull. de Præscript. adv. Hær. § xi. Oper. p. 107.

It is difficult to believe, that Tertullian, in the second century,

Now, if, contrary to the evident drift and purpose both of Irenæus and of Tertullian, these bishops had been identical with presbyters; then, in each church, however large, there could have been no more than *one* presbyter at *one* time: for, in the account of these two ancient writers, it is quite clear that each church possessed no more than a *single* bishop in each step of the succession.

Such a speculation, even in the abstract, is *strangely incredible*: but, if we once more advert to the oldest extant testimony of Clement, we shall find, that it is *positively erroneous*. Under terms borrowed from the law of Moses, Clement distinctly specifies the three orders of bishops and presbyters and deacons. Nor, I think, is it possible to mistake his meaning. Though he employs Hebrew terms of nomenclature, he is indisputably speaking of the organization of the christian church, as it stood in his own time while many of the apostles were yet alive. In that church, he states the existence, and defines the separate duties, of four different classes of individuals. Each distinct provincial church is described as having a single officer, whom in Jewish phraseology he calls *the high priest*, an indefinite number of inferior officers whom he similarly calls *priests*, an indefinite number of yet lower officers whom he styles *Levites*, and a numerically varying body of unofficial persons whom he denominates *laics*. All these are members of one provincial church: and all have their own respective duties. In Clement's perfectly unambiguous words, "The chief priest has his proper services: and 'to the priests their proper place is appointed: and to 'the Levites appertain their proper ministrations: and 'the layman is confined within the bounds of what is 'commanded to laymen." Such is Clement's picture

could thus, in a controversial work, have appealed to an *alleged notorious FACT*; if, all the while, every person knew, that this *alleged notorious FACT* was a *positive FALSEHOOD*,

of a primitive provincial church, as modelled by the apostles according to Christ's most holy institution, and as actually subsisting in the first century while many of the apostles were still alive.

III. These venerable documents of remote ecclesiastical antiquity, so grievously neglected in this our evil day of shallow innovation, at once receive corroboration from Scripture, and teach us how we ought to understand Scripture.

The twelve apostles, those first bishops and spiritual foundations of the holy catholic church, were ordained by Christ himself.* But the apostles were mortal men. Common sense, therefore, even independently of our Lord's own words, might teach, that the apostles were similarly to ordain their successors in the canonical government of the church.† Accordingly, in exact agreement with Clement's testimony to the *FACT*, we find them, in the first instance, consecrating Matthias:‡ and, afterward, as the church increased, so soon as diocesan bishops, as described by Clement and Irenæus and Tertullian, became necessary, we find bishops of this precise character regularly appointed by apostolic authority.§

That the Lord should specially ratify and approve an institution of his own ordaining, were small wonder: yet, as if to prevent those contentions about the ministry to which the primitive Clement alludes, and which he pronounces the apostles to have foreseen, Christ himself, the great high-priest and bishop of the universal church, solemnly delivers seven distinct charges, each after the manner best adapted to the necessity of his particular condition, to those seven individuals, who were the bishops of the seven Asiatic churches at the time when St. John wrote the Apocalypse. By thus officially addressing those bishops,

* Matt. x. xi. 1. Rev. xxi. 14.

† Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

‡ Acts i. 23—26.

§ 1 Tim. i. 18. iii. 1—7. iv. 11—16. v. 1, 17, 21, 22. vi. 11—21. 2 Tim. i. 6—14. ii. 2. iv. 1—8. Tit. ii. 5—11. iii. 10.

he virtually ratifies their office: for, whatever might be their respective *personal* conduct, such an address clearly implies the divine validity of their *function*.

If the date assigned by Irenæus to the composition of the Apocalypse be just, of which I see no sufficient reason to doubt; in that case, the angel or messenger of the church of Smyrna (for John adopts the phraseology of the ancient prophets when he speaks of these seven primitive bishops*) must apparently have been the venerable Polycarp, then newly placed by the apostle over that society.†

Here, then, Scripture corresponds with the testimony of Clement, that the apostles ordained bishops as their successors: while it exactly meets the declaration of Irenæus, that his master, Polycarp, was appointed by John to the see of Smyrna at the latter end of the first century.

I have now produced, in as brief a form as possible, my *evidence to facts*: and I know not where we can learn primitive order and canonical discipline, if we find them not in Scripture, explained by the unequivocally recorded practice of the two first centuries.

* See Malach. ii. 7.

† Neque enim ante multum temporis visum est (scil. oraculum Apocalypseos), sed pene sub nostro sæculo, ad finem Domitiani imperii.—Iren. adv. Hær. lib. v. c. 25. § 6.

CHAPTER II.

Respecting the Latin Objections to the Church of England in general, and to the Orders of the Church of England in particular.

SINCE the polity of the church of England at the time of the Reformation was modelled upon the polity of the primitive church, as instituted by Christ and his inspired apostles, it may appear somewhat extraordinary, that the bishop of Aire, however he may dislike our doctrine, should object to our discipline. Yet such is the fact. His lordship commences his work with an historical account of the establishment of the reformed church of England: and, in that account, he objects both to the Anglican church in general, and to the validity of her orders in particular.*

I. His objection to the church of England in general rests upon the personal character of Henry the Eighth, and upon the arbitrary conduct of Elizabeth.

1. If, as in the case of King Henry the Eighth, the Almighty never employed the bad passions of men to bring about a beneficial result; if he was never known to elicit good out of evil; if no instance could be produced of his using an irreligious prince to advance his own purposes of mercy or of judgment: then perhaps the objection of the bishop of Aire, founded upon the personal character of an English sovereign, might have some weight. But, as matters now stand, I discern not, how the independence and

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. i.

the doctrines of the Anglican church can be at all affected by the character of King Henry the Eighth.

The church of England denies the supremacy of the bishop of Rome; and propounds, as the terms of her communion, certain doctrines in her thirty-nine articles.

On these points she may be very right, as *we* think; or she may be very wrong, as the *bishop of Aire* thinks: but, let her be right or let her be wrong, it is clear that the soundness of her expressed opinions depends not, in the slightest degree, upon the personal character of King Henry. Had he been the most correct prince upon record, his virtues could never have made that right which intrinsically is wrong. Conversely, therefore, so far at least as I can understand the principles of accurate reasoning, his vices and his violence cannot make that wrong which intrinsically is right.

All that the bishop has said respecting the personal character of Henry, seems to me to leave the real question at issue wholly untouched. A bad man may perform a very good deed from very bad motives. In the course of God's providence, other persons may be largely benefited by the goodness of the deed; though, by a Being, who regards motives, it may never be imputed as a truly religious act to the original performer. We may fairly doubt, whether the character of Constantine will bear a severe scrutiny: yet it were singular reasoning to impeach, on that account, the christian religion. Julian, indeed, argues in some such manner: but the bishop of Aire would not wish to imitate Julian.*

2. Much the same remarks are applicable to that part of his objection, which rests upon the conduct of Elizabeth.

This great princess, as we all know, was very arbitrary both in church and in state: and she did much

* Julian. Cæsar. Oper. p. 335, 336.

which could not be done, and would not be tolerated, in the present day. But I see not how the submission, which she exacted from her clergy, can affect the merits of the present question. If we grant, that she exacted, and that they submitted, further than was justifiable, still the point cannot be finally and legitimately determined by the conduct of mere individuals. The true doctrine of the Anglican church, on the topic of royal authority, must be obviously learned from her own declaration, as set forth, in the year 1562, by the archbishops and bishops and clergy of both provinces: a declaration, approved and ratified by Elizabeth herself, and again confirmed by the universal subscription of the whole clerical body in the year 1571.

In what manner, then, does the church of England, with the consent of this very Elizabeth, whose arbitrary conduct is made the basis of an objection, express her sentiments on the topic now before us?

‘The king’s majesty hath the chief power in this realm of England and other his dominions, unto whom the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes doth appertain; and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction. Where we attribute to the king’s majesty the chief government, by which titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not to our princes the ministering either of God’s word or of the sacraments, the which thing the injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our queen do most plainly testify: but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly princes in Holy Scripture by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil doers.’*

* Art. xxxvii.

It might be thought, that nothing could be more plain and explicit than this solemn and authoritative declaration: the bishop, however, contends, that we clergy of the Anglican church derive all our spiritual powers ultimately from Elizabeth; whence he maintains, that our church is built upon human sanctions alone, and that a link is effectually broken in the chain which ought to unite us to the apostles.

From the crown we certainly derive our temporalities; from the crown also we receive a legal sanction to exercise our functions, whether as bishops or as presbyters, within the limits of certain regularly-defined dioceses or parishes: but I am at a loss to perceive, how this circumstance either snaps the chain of apostolic succession or causes our church to be built upon human sanctions alone. For let us suppose, that we were deprived of our present legal establishment: what would be the consequence? Should we lose our spiritual authority as bishops or as presbyters? Such, I apprehend, would by no means be the result. We should simply be brought to the state of our venerable clerical brethren of the protestant episcopal churches of Scotland and America. What the crown gave, it may resume: what the crown did not give, it cannot take away. From the apostles we derive our *spiritual power of order*: from the crown we derive our *temporal power of jurisdiction*. The continuance of the former, in the church general, is independent of any mere human ordinance: the continuance of the latter, within certain prescribed geographical limits, depends upon the law of the land. Doubtless, it may please God to remove our candlestick altogether: but the spiritual power of our clergy depends neither upon our king nor upon our parliament. The *spiritual power of order* we assuredly derived not from Elizabeth; hence, of *that* power no present or future sovereign of England can deprive us.*

* There are some excellent remarks, on this frequently-misunderstood subject, in a speech of the present bishop of Durham before the House of Lords, p. 8—13.

II. Yet, says the bishop of Aire, we owe everything in our ecclesiastical constitution to Elizabeth: and the chain of apostolic succession is thence of necessity broken.

His lordship, in making such an assertion, forgets what he himself has stated respecting the measures adopted by this identical Elizabeth.

In order to prove, that our *spiritual power of order* is derived from that great princess, it would, I apprehend, have been necessary to shew, that the bishops, whom she introduced as fathers into the reformed church of England, were all solemnly consecrated by *herself*. Could *this* fact have been ascertained, the bishop would clearly have gained his point: but, in truth, his own statement nullifies his own assertions. Elizabeth, conscious that *she* possessed no power of conferring spiritual authority upon any man, undertook not the preposterous task of *herself* consecrating the new bishops: on the contrary, as the bishop of Aire very truly states the matter, she called in, for that purpose, Hoskins, Scory, Barlow, and Coverdale; all of whom, as he allows, had been canonically consecrated to the episcopate.*

Now, it is impossible to conceive a stronger practical confession on the part of Elizabeth, that the church of England derived not from *her* any spiritual authority, than the fact which has been adduced by the bishop of Aire *himself*. According to his *own* shewing, the spiritual authority of the Anglican church, let it be valid or invalid, was derived, not from Elizabeth, but from the four regularly consecrated bishops, Hoskins, Scory, Barlow, and Coverdale. These four ecclesiastics were themselves, confessedly, in regular episcopal orders: *they*, not *the queen*, consecrated Parker to the metropolitan see of Canterbury: and, when this matter had been accom-

* Barlow was bishop elect of Chichester; Scory, bishop elect of Hereford; Coverdale, late bishop of Exeter; and Hoskins, or Hodgkins, bishop suffragan of Bedford.

plished, Parker, as primate, presided at the consecration of all the other new bishops.*

Thus, according to the bishop's *own* account, the Anglican church derived not an atom of spiritual authority from Elizabeth: on the contrary, the spiritual authority of that church has been confessedly received from four prelates, who had themselves already been canonically consecrated to the episcopate by other canonical bishops, their predecessors.

In what manner, then, we may well ask, are we a church of mere human institution? In what manner is the chain of succession, which ultimately binds us to the apostles, snapped asunder? The bishop of Aire objects to the validity of our orders. On what ground does he make the objection?

* The following is a somewhat more detailed account of the whole transaction: and it may serve to show the anxious care which was taken by Elizabeth, that the bishops of the reformed Anglican church should be regularly consecrated by men who had themselves received episcopal consecration.

The bishops of Durham, Wells, and Peterborough, who had been included in the first warrant under the great seal, refused to concur in the consecration of Parker. A new warrant therefore was issued, directed to Barlow, bishop elect of Chichester; Scory, bishop elect of Hereford; Coverdale, late bishop of Exeter; Hodgkins, bishop suffragan of Bedford; John, bishop suffragan of Thetford; Bale, bishop of Ossory, and the bishop of Llandaff, that they, or any four of them, should consecrate him. Accordingly, on Dec. 9, 1560, Barlow, Scory, Coverdale, and Hodgkins, met at the church of St. Mary-le-bow, where the Congé d'élire, and the election, and the royal assent to it, were read before them; witnesses appearing to establish the legality of the election, and an opportunity being afforded to any person who might be disposed to object. This preliminary ceremonial having been performed, Parker, on Dec. 17, 1560, was consecrated by the four bishops in the chapel at Lambeth, according to the form of ordinations made in the time of King Edward. Parker, having been thus consecrated to the primacy, joined afterwards in consecrating bishops for the other sees.

It is evident, that the hinge of the whole matter entirely turns upon the *previous episcopal consecration of the four bishops*. This fact is not denied by the bishop of Aire. Nothing, therefore, can invalidate their consecration of Parker, save the loss of their own episcopal character.

Hoskins, he tells us, was only a suffragan bishop; whose short-lived see of Bedford had been suppressed, and had never been re-established: Scory, Barlow, and Coverdale, had been canonically deposed, in the preceding reign of Mary, on the ground that they had entered into the holy estate of matrimony: and, even if none of these irregularities had existed, still the consecration of Parker to the primacy was invalid; because neither the patriarch of the West, nor the bishops of the province acting by his authority, as required by the fourth canon of the first Council of Nice, had ordained and confirmed such consecration.

To complete the bishop's demonstration, that the orders of the reformed Anglican church are invalid, nothing is wanting, save the establishment of a few, perhaps, not unimportant particulars.

When he shall have satisfactorily shewn, that a suffragan bishop forfeits his episcopal orders upon the suppression of his see by royal authority; when he shall have clearly demonstrated, that a bishop in England may be lawfully deposed for the alleged crime of marriage by the authority of a bishop in Italy; and when he shall have fully proved, that a council, which sat in the year 325, had a right to make null and void the ancient simple mode of the consecration of bishops by bishops, and to impose, as a matter of necessity, the intervention of a patriarch: then, but not until then, the bishop of Aire will have made good his position, that the English chain of apostolic succession has been snapped asunder in the midst.

CHAPTER III.

Respecting the alleged Schism of the Reformed Church of England.

WHILE the bishop of Aire demonstrates, at considerable length, the excellence and advantages of ecclesiastical unity, he charges the reformed church of England with the crime of schism: whence he takes occasion to urge a speedy reconciliation with, or rather a complete submission to, the church of Rome.*

The advantages of ecclesiastical unity, where it can be conscientiously obtained, I readily admit: nor can the Latin bishop of Aire more strenuously deprecate causeless schism, than the protestant church of England. But I am not aware, that a perfectly independent national church can be justly charged with schism, simply because, deriving her theology from the Bible and primitive antiquity, she denies the supremacy of another equally independent national church which groundlessly claims to possess the right of universal spiritual domination. If, in resistance to this pretended right of domination and in the internal arrangement of her own private concerns, she incur the fierce indignation and fall under the presumptuous anathema of the lawlessly usurping church: when a separation is thus produced, the guilt of schism rests, not with the church which vindicates her own just liberties, but with the church which arrogantly

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. ii.

seeks to invade them, and which makes absolute submission the price of christian communion. At least, the invading church cannot legitimately tax the invaded church with schism, because she resolutely maintains her own independence; until it shall have been satisfactorily shown, that the invading church possesses a divine right of spiritual domination.

The ground on which a case of schism is made out by the invading church of Rome against the invaded church of England may be stated, I believe, in manner following:—

‘St. Peter as the primate of the apostolic college, and the line of the Roman bishops, his successors in place and prerogative, constitute the divinely-appointed head of the catholic church and the divinely-appointed centre of ecclesiastical unity. Such being the indisputable fact, those national churches, which are in submissive communion with the see of Rome, are sound branches of the church catholic: while those national churches, which are not in submissive communion with the see of Rome, though collectively they may count up as many, or possibly even more, members than the national churches differently circumstanced, are cut off *ipso facto* from the only genuine catholic church; and must thence be viewed, as existing in a state of unhallowed schism or heresy, or both. Now, in this condition, the national church of England has undeniably placed herself. Therefore, the national church of England, even to speak the most gently of her, is clearly in a state of schism from the only genuine church catholic.’*

* Quod Romana Ecclesia à solo Domino sit fundata: quod solus Romanus Pontifex jure dictatur Universalis: quod ille solus possit deponere episcopos vel reconciliare: quod legatus ejus omnibus episcopis præsint in concilio, etiam inferioris gradus, et adversus eos sententiam depositionis possit dare: quod absentes possit Papa deponere: quod cum excommunicatis ab illo, inter cætera, nec in eadem domo debemus manere: quod illi liceat imperatores deponere: quod nulla synodus absque præcepto ejus debet gene-

The basis of this favourite Latin argument is the alleged fact, that 'St. Peter as the primate of the apostolic college, and the line of the Roman bishops his successors in place and prerogative, constitute the divinely-appointed head of the catholic church and the divinely-appointed centre of ecclesiastical unity.'

Let that alleged fact, then, be substantiated; and the argument, I readily admit, will be conclusive: but let it fail of being substantiated; and the argument, which altogether rests upon it, will doubtless be inconclusive. Hence our sole business is, to look to the basis of the argument.

I. Since the basis of the argument is a declared **HISTORICAL FACT**, we must obviously try and examine it as we would do any other fact in history.

Now, in the sacred inspired volume, we have a detailed narrative of the early actions of the apostles subsequent to the ascension of their divine Lord and Master: and, appended to this narrative, we have several epistolary documents, which throw a very considerable degree of light upon those primitive matters.

Hence it is natural and reasonable, in the first instance, to examine these ancient historical records; in order that we may so determine, simply as a point of **FACT**, whether they do, or do not, establish the basis of our argument.

1. We must begin, then, with inquiring, whether any special primacy seems, *in practice*, to have been dutifully and religiously conceded to St. Peter by the other inferior members of the apostolic college.

ralis vocari: quod sententia illius à nullo debeat retractari, et ipse omnium solus retractare possit: quod à nemine ipse judicari debeat: quod Romana Ecclesia nunquam erravit, nec in perpetuum, testante Scriptura, errabit: quod Romanus Pontifex, si canonicè fuerit ordinatus, meritis beati Petri indubitanter efficitur sanctus: quod illius præcepto et licentia subjectis liceat accusare: quod absque synodati conventu possit episcopos deponere et reconciliare: quod catholicus non habeatur qui non concordat Romanæ Ecclesiæ: quod à fidelitate iniquorum subjectos potest absolvere. Dictat. Papæ Gregor. sept. in Epist. lib. ii. epist. 55. Labb. Concil. Sacros. vol. x. p. 110, 111.

It will, of course, be understood, that I speak not of *mere communion*. The inquiry before us respects, not *mere communion*, but *authoritative primacy*. Doubtless, the inspired apostles were in full communion with each other; but this is not the present question: the present question is, 'whether they were 'in communion as the equal delegates of their common divine superior, the great universal shepherd 'and bishop of souls; or whether they were in communion as suffragans, dependent upon and canonically obedient to their divinely-appointed and conscientiously acknowledged primate St. Peter.'

Now, so far as I can read and understand the historical documents before us, we have ample proof of the former fact, but we have no adequate proof of the latter fact: and it will be recollected, that our inquiry regards an alleged naked *FACT only*.

(1.) Shortly after the ascension, we find St. Peter apparently taking the lead in the important business of appointing a successor to the miserable Judas. He acts at least as a sort of prolocutor; and, in so far, he might seem to have some kind of pre-eminence: but, as we advance in the narrative, the phantom of an absolute primacy flits away from our grasp and vanishes into impalpable ether.

Had Peter been the divinely-appointed vicar of Christ upon earth; HE, no doubt, acting as the Lord's special representative, would have appointed, by his own exclusive sovereign authority, the new suffragan apostle: for, in regard to such elevated rank, it were plainly inconsistent to come to any other conclusion. But, in point of fact, we do not find, that this was the case. THEY, not HE, appointed two candidates for the vacant office: and when that preliminary step had been *collectively* taken, most probably by the votes of the majority, the matter was referred, by lot, to the supreme head of the church himself.*

* Acts i. 13—26.

From these recorded circumstances I infer, that the prolocution of the zealous and warm-hearted Peter was rather incidental than official.

(2.) The next time that we hear of Peter is on the day of Pentecost. ALL the apostles *equally* speaking with tongues, the strangers in Jerusalem are not a little amazed. Whereupon Peter, standing up with the eleven, explains to them the fact and nature and object of the miracle.

Now the substance of the speech, ascribed by name to Peter, must certainly, both from the turn of the expression and from the necessity of the narrative, have been alike delivered by ALL the apostles. Had Peter *alone* spoken in a *single* particular tongue, a small part only of the multitude would have understood him. Doubtless, therefore, the same matters were delivered by the other apostles in other tongues to other divisions of the multitude: and, accordingly, we read, not that Peter stood up *solely*, but that he stood up *jointly* with the eleven; not that the multitude in return addressed Peter *exclusively*, but that they spake unto Peter and unto *the rest of the apostles*.*

(3.) Soon after this transaction, we find St. Peter, not acting the primate, but submitting with St. John to the collective authority of the apostolic college.

‘When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, *they* sent unto them Peter and John.’†

It is easy to conceive that Christ’s vicar might send two of his dependant suffragans, in the quality of his legates, upon an ecclesiastical errand: but it is very difficult to explain, how the dependant suffragans took upon themselves to send Christ’s vicar and their own lawful primate upon the business of the church. This circumstance alone, I fear, will greatly endanger the basis of our argument.

* Acts ii. 1—37.

† Ibid. viii. 14.

(4.) In course of time, the Gentiles, no less than the Jews, received the word of God from the honoured hand of Peter. But this circumstance displeased those of the circumcision: and they forthwith proceeded to contend with their primate. Yet that high officer, most unaccountably, did not silence them by the divine authority of his vicariate. So far from it, he was content to vindicate himself on the very sufficient score, that it was not for *him* to withstand God. Satisfied by this rational process, the gainsayers held their peace and glorified the Lord: it is evident, however, that they submitted, not to Peter's primate mandate, but to the very ample reason which he gave for his conduct.*

(5.) We next have an account of what is usually called the first Council at Jerusalem.

In this assembly, after much previous disputation, Peter is said to have risen up and spoken. He was followed by Barnabas and Paul. And the business was finally closed by James: who, apparently as the president of the synod, gave his ultimate sentence. Barsabas and Silas were then sent to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, not however by Peter in his supposed capacity of primate, but by the apostles and elders in conjunction with the whole church; Peter himself not being even so much as once mentioned in the decretal letter, which runs in the general name of the apostles and presbyters and brethren.†

From such a narrative if we could collect anything specific, it would be, that James, not Peter, was the primate of the apostolic college: but, in truth, we learn nothing as to the primacy of either. James seems to have presided on the occasion: but, if that were the case, he was a mere temporary president. The decree of the council avowedly rests on the general collective authority of the apostles and presbyters, acting in harmonious conjunction with the whole church.

* Acts xi. 1—18.

† Ibid. xv. 4—31.

Neither Peter, nor Peter's legate, ruled the assembly: nor do the concurrence and sanction of Peter seem to have been at all more necessary than the concurrence and sanction of any other apostle, in order to make the decree of the council valid and canonical. This primitive council, in short, furnishes no warrant for any of those arbitrary and fanciful rules, by which the church of Rome, in the midst of jarring synods, vainly attempts to preserve a shadow of chimerical infallibility.

(6.) After this, in the volume of the Acts, we hear much of Paul, but nothing of Peter. The imaginary primate disappears from the historic stage altogether. Not once more is he mentioned to the very end of the book. Paul evidently labours in perfect independence of him and without the slightest reference to his supposed authority. In equal communion indeed, and in christian amity, these two great apostles no doubt lived: but, as for any primacy in the church, Paul was no more subject to Peter, than Peter to Paul. Not a hint on the topic is dropped in any part of the history: nor is Peter throughout his two epistles, or Paul throughout his fourteen epistles, at all more communicative. The tone of Peter's epistles argues no superiority over his apostolic brethren: and the almost only epistle of Paul, wherein Peter is mentioned, is fatal to the notion of a primacy. Paul carefully, and (as it were) jealously, intimates, that he derived his authority neither from Peter nor from James nor from any other of the apostles, but by revelation of Jesus Christ alone: and, agreeably to this claim of perfect independence, when he met Peter at Antioch, he *withstood him*, as he assured the Galatians, *to his face, because he was to be blamed*.*

(7.) Equally silent on the subject of that primacy, which the Latins so greatly extol, are the epistles of James and John and Jude: nor do we find the least

* Galat. i. 11—24. ii. 1 16.

degree of light thrown on the topic in any part of the Apocalypse.

Now, if the doctrine had been so essential as the Romanists contend, how are we to account, not only for this extraordinary total preterition, but (what is yet more remarkable) for the absolutely incompatible language of St. Paul? If the theory of the Latin church be valid, if canonical submission to St. Peter and his alleged successors in the see of Rome be absolutely necessary to ecclesiastical unity; I perceive not, how we can exempt from the charge of schism even the great apostle of the gentiles himself.

2. Since then, in the apostolic practice and writings, we can discover no vestiges of the primacy of St. Peter, we shall not be very sanguine in our hopes of detecting any recognition of the primacy of St. Peter's alleged successors.

The documents, which we are the most naturally led to examine for this purpose, are the two Epistles of St. Peter, and St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. I need scarcely point out the reason. St. Peter, one might well imagine, when writing two *general* epistles, would not fail to urge upon his readers, where-soever scattered, the great and religious importance of acknowledging, as a divinely-appointed centre of unity, both his own primacy and that of his Roman successors. Such an admonition would the more naturally flow from his pen, since he has been thought to have written at least his first epistle from Rome.* Be that however as it may, if the doctrine be so vitally important as the Latins assert, we can hardly suppose that Peter would have been altogether *silent* on the subject. Yet silent he is, though not unprofitably. His silence speaks volumes. Much the same remark applies to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

* 1 Peter v. 13. There is no reason to suppose, that Peter ever resided in the literal Babylon. Hence the figurative Babylon, whence he dates his letter, has been thought not unreasonably to be Rome. See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. c. 15.

That letter is by no means a short one. The apostle treats largely in it both of doctrine and of practice. Yet, in no one part of it, does he give the slightest hint as to either the existence or necessity of any primacy in the church of Rome. This, I think, could scarcely have happened, more especially when we recollect that the epistle was destined for immortality, had St. Paul symbolized with the Latin doctors.

In fact, if St. Peter and his alleged Roman successors had been the divinely-appointed primates of the catholic church, we shall encounter, even at the very first descent of the office, a most singular chronological difficulty. According to Irenæus, the church of Rome was jointly founded by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul: and the bishop, whom they appointed in the first instance, was Linus.* Now Peter certainly died before John, and probably before several other of the apostles. Such being the case, a most extraordinary inversion of all ecclesiastical order must, according to the Latin theory, have inevitably followed. If Peter himself were the first primate, and if his primacy was ordained to descend to his alleged Roman successors; then, upon the death of Peter, the existing bishop of Rome, whoever that bishop might be at the death of Peter, would become the canonical primate of the entire catholic church. St. John, however, was undoubtedly alive when Peter died. Hence, as John had been a suffragan of the primate Peter, he would plainly, on the death of Peter, become a suffragan of the new Roman primate who was Peter's legitimate successor in the primacy: and thus, at length, we shall be brought to the goodly conclusion, that an inspired apostle of the Lord owed canonical obedience to an uninspired bishop of Rome.

II. Upon what then, it will naturally be asked by the English laic, who (as we learn from the bishop of Aire) has fallen into the sickly humour of being dis-

* Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3. § 2.

contented with his own church: upon what then rests the claim of Rome to the primacy of the church catholic?

It rests, let the English laic know, upon the following passage in the gospel according to St. Matthew:—

‘When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am? And they said: Some say, that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias or one of the prophets. He saith unto them: But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that Thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and, whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and, whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.’*

The process of inductive reasoning, by which the supremacy of the see of Rome is extracted from the present passage, may be stated in manner following:—

‘Christ declares Peter to be the rock, upon which he would build his church: and he communicates also to him the power both of binding and of loosing. Now, in this figurative but perfectly intelligible language, Christ grants to Peter the primacy of the universal church, and constitutes him the centre of ecclesiastical unity. But Peter was a mortal man: and the office of primate, having been divinely appointed as the preservative of ecclesiastical unity, was destined to be perpetual. Hence, as the office could not die with Peter, it must clearly descend to Peter’s successors. Who, then, are the canonical

* Matth. xvi. 13—19.

‘successors of Peter? Undoubtedly, they are the
 ‘bishops of Rome. For, since Peter was the first
 ‘bishop of Rome, all succeeding bishops of Rome are
 ‘his canonical successors: and, since they are his
 ‘canonical successors in the bishopric, they only can
 ‘be his canonical successors in the primacy. Whence
 ‘it follows, that those who are not built upon the rock
 ‘Peter, or (in other words) those who render not
 ‘canonical obedience to the supreme universal pri-
 ‘mate, are manifest schismatics and convicted aliens
 ‘from the catholic church of Christ.’

It is evident, that the whole of the present argu-
 ment rests ultimately upon the two following posi-
 tions: that ‘Peter was the first bishop of Rome;’
 and that ‘Christ, by declaring Peter to be the rock
 ‘upon which he would build his entire church, con-
 ‘ferred upon that apostle and his successors in the see
 ‘of Rome the divine right of an universally-control-
 ‘ling primacy.’

Such then being the case, before we admit the con-
 clusiveness of the argument, we must carefully exam-
 ine, whether the two main positions, upon which it
 rests, be *themselves* tenable.

1. Whatever may be the precise nature of the grant
 made by our Lord to Peter, it is clear that the bishops
 of Rome can propound no valid claim to the inheri-
 tance of that grant, unless they can establish the alleg-
 ed historical fact, that *they are the canonical succes-
 sors of Peter*. But the medium, through which they
 would establish this alleged historical fact, is the cir-
 cumstance, that *Peter was the first bishop of Rome*.
 Therefore, the circumstance, that *Peter was the first
 bishop of Rome*, is the point to be proved by them.

Now the position, that *Peter was the first bishop
 of Rome*, rests not even upon the shadow of a founda-
 tion.

All that we know, respecting the early history of
 the Roman see, is derived ultimately from Irenæus,
 who flourished in the second century: for Eusebius

professedly gives the whole of *his* statement on the authority of Irenæus.*

Does Irenæus then inform us, that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, and that he handed down his divine prerogative (whatever it might be) to his successors in that paramount diocese?

Certainly we receive no such information from that ancient father: and, if we receive it not from him, I know not from what other authentic source we can learn it.

According to Irenæus, the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, were the co-founders of the church of Rome: and he informs us, that, when they had thus jointly founded that church, they jointly delivered the episcopate of it to Linus. With respect to *either* of the two co-founders ever having been *himself* bishop of Rome, Irenæus is totally silent. He simply states, that Peter and Paul, by their joint authority, founded the church of Rome: and he adds, that, when they had so founded it, they forthwith, still by their joint authority, delivered the episcopate of it to Linus.†

Such is the narrative of Irenæus: and I see not what we can learn from it, save that *Linus was the first bishop of Rome*, and consequently that *neither* of the two co-founders of that church ever presided over it in the capacity of a diocesan bishop.

To this conclusion we are, in fact, irresistibly driven, both by the general argument, and by the particular statement, of Irenæus.

His general argument is, that ‘the tradition of the apostles must exist in all the apostolic churches; because each church possessed an accurate list of her

* See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 2. 4. lib. v. c. 5, 6. See also a note by Cotelerius on Constit. Apost. lib. vii. c. 46.‡

† Fundantes igitur et instruantes beati apostoli (Petrus et Paulus) ecclesiam (Romanam), Lino episcopatum administrandæ ecclesiæ tradiderunt.—Succedit autem ei Anacletus. Post eum, tertio loco ab apostolis, episcopatum sortitur Clemens. Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3. § 2.

‘bishops, beginning with him to whom the episcopate had been originally committed by the apostles themselves.’

His particular statement is ‘the episcopal succession of the Roman church, which he gives as an avowed specimen of all other episcopal successions.’

If then the *first* bishop of each apostolic church was the person, to whom in the *first* instance the apostolic founder of that church committed the episcopate of it; Linus, being the person to whom in the *first* instance the two apostolic founders of the Roman church committed the episcopate of that church, must clearly have been the *first* bishop of Rome.

Accordingly, the catalogue of the Roman bishops, as given by Irenæus, is plainly constructed upon this identical principle.

He begins with specifying the two co-founders of the church, Peter and Paul: and, when that has been done, he gives a list of twelve successive bishops down to his own time; the *first* of whom, Linus, he describes as having received the episcopate from the hands of the two apostolic co-founders themselves.

Nor is this the only difficulty which impedes the Latin speculation, that *Peter was the first bishop of Rome*. Had Peter been the *sole* founder of that church; a plea, though a very weak plea, might have been set up, that he was also its first bishop. But, in truth, Peter and Paul were the *joint* founders of the Roman church: whence it is evident, that Peter does not stand *alone* in the degree immediately before Linus, but that Peter and Paul stand *jointly* in that degree. No plea, therefore, can be advanced for the primary Roman episcopate of *Peter*, which may not be equally advanced for the primary Roman episcopate of Paul.*

* It is worthy of note, that, in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the person who appointed Linus the first bishop of Rome, is said to have been ST. PAUL. Constit. Apost. lib. vii. c. 46. This statement, though it *varies* from the more full account given by Irenæus, yet does not absolutely *contradict* it. For, if Linus were

Under such circumstances, it is perfectly clear, according both to the general argument and to the particular statement of Irenæus, that the bishops of Rome are no more, in any *peculiar* and *exclusive* sense, the successors of Peter, than the bishop of any other ancient church in the founding of which Peter was similarly concerned. The bishops of *any* church, founded by Peter, may, in a *general* sense, be called *the successors of Peter*; but, why the bishops of Rome, more than the bishops of any other church similarly circumstanced, should claim to be *special* and *exclusively* the successors of Peter, we most assuredly receive no information from Irenæus.

Thus untenable is one of the main positions, upon which is built the papal claim to an universal controlling supremacy.

Even if our Lord had intended to constitute Peter the ruling primate of the apostolic college and the alone centre of ecclesiastical unity, still his supposed high prerogative would not descend to the line of the Roman bishops, more than to the line of any other bishops, unless the Roman bishops can demonstrate themselves to be his *special* and *exclusive* successors in the primacy.

appointed the first bishop of Rome by PAUL and PETER, he was doubtless so appointed by the authority of PAUL; though PAUL, in transacting the business, did not act *singly* but *jointly*. Yet the circumstance is remarkable: for since the name of PETER could be *wholly omitted* in an account of the foundation of the Roman church, and since the consecration of Linus could have been *nakedly* ascribed to *another person*; such a circumstance clearly shews, how little stress could have been laid in the early ages upon the imagined primacy of PETER and his alleged Roman successors. On the supposition, that *the Roman church was jointly founded by PETER and PAUL*, and on the additional supposition, that *the sentiments of the early ages respecting the primacy of PETER corresponded with the sentiments of the modern Latins*, it is evident, that, in common parlance, though Linus would often be said to have been *simply* appointed by PETER, he would never be said to have been *simply* appointed by PAUL. The language of the *Apostolic Constitutions* would never, I apprehend, be adopted by a zealous Latin of the present day.

2. As the bishops of Rome are, in no *eminent* or *peculiar* sense, the successors of St. Peter: so antiquity recognised nothing of the claim to a dominant supremacy, preferred by the present pontiffs and their adherents, on the strength of our Lord's declaration, that he would found his church upon a rock, and would give to Peter the power of the keys.

To say nothing respecting the fact, that all the twelve apostles are *equally* declared to be foundations of the church, and that the power of binding and loosing is *equally* conferred upon the whole collective body;* to say nothing respecting this important fact, the passage now before us is *abstractedly* capable of no less than *three* interpretations.

The rock, spoken of by Christ, may either be *Peter individually* or it may be *Peter and his successors collectively*, wherever those successors are to be found: or it may be *the open confession of our Lord's divinity*, which had just been made by Peter, and which in effect was the precise matter that led to Christ's remarkable declaration.

So far as the *bare phraseology* of the passage is concerned, *any one* of these *three* expositions is perfectly tenable. The church of Rome, therefore, cannot be allowed to build a most important doctrine upon her own mere arbitrary and interested interpretation of an ambiguous passage.

With whatever degree of reason, the bishop of Aire claims the early ecclesiastical writers, as his special friends and allies. To these writers, then, as unexceptionable umpires, let the matter now under litigation be referred.

I have stated, that, so far as *mere phraseology* is concerned, the passage is capable of *three* interpretations. Now, it is a curious circumstance, that *not one* of the early ecclesiastical writers, so far as I have had an opportunity of examining them, adopts the in-

* See Rev. xxi. 14. John xx. 23.

terpretation preferred by the modern Latins. The *most* early fathers suspiciously pass the text over in total silence; and, when at length it begins to be produced, *some* pronounce the rock to be the individual Peter; *others* declare, that it can only be Christ himself or (what amounts to the same thing) Peter's confession of Christ's divinity; *none*, so far as I know, distinctly and uniformly declare it to be Peter and his alleged Roman successors conjointly.*

Clement and Ignatius and Polycarp never once mention the passage: and, although their treatment of a common subject, particularly when that subject is in the hands of the Roman Clement, might well lead to a distinct statement, that the bishop of Rome is the centre of ecclesiastical unity and the divinely appointed primate of the entire catholic church; not a single word do they say respecting (if we may believe the Latins) this vitally important doctrine.†

* If there be any semblance of exception to this statement, it is afforded by Jerome, who flourished at the latter end of the fourth century. The language in one of his epistles to Pope Damasus, is so worded, that it may be understood, either as identifying the rock with the see of Rome viewed under the aspect of the special see of St. Peter, or as identifying the rock with Christ, the alone primate of the church catholic.

Ego, nullum primum nisi Christum sequens, beatitudini tuæ, id est cathedræ Petri, communione consocior. Super illam petram ædificatam Ecclesiam scio.—Hieron. Epist. lvii. ad Damas. Oper. vol. i. p. 163.

In this ambiguous passage, the question is, whether Jerome meant to refer *illam petram* to *nullum primum nisi Christum* or to *cathedræ Petri*. The Romanist will of course maintain the latter: and doubtless he might do it with much plausibility, had not Jerome elsewhere distinctly pronounced the rock to be Christ.

Sicut ipse lumen apostolis donavit, ut lumen mundi appellarentur; ceteraque ex Domino sortiti sunt vocabula: ita et Simoni, qui credebatur in *petram Christum*, Petri largitus est nomen.—Hieron. Comment. in Matt. xvi. 18. lib. iii. Oper. vol. vi. p. 33.

The interpretation of Jerome in this last passage will carry the greater weight, because it occurs in a professed commentary upon the text itself. Hence it may be doubted, whether that father ever meant to affirm, that the rock was the see of Rome.

† Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians to settle their

Justin, who flourished during the middle part of the second century, is, if I mistake not, the earliest ancient who cites and explains the text. But how does he explain it? Does he favour the modern interpretation of the church of Rome: or does he view the passage under a totally different aspect? Truly he makes the rock to be, neither Peter himself exclusively, nor Peter in conjunction with his imaginary Roman successors: on the contrary, this primitive expositor supposes the rock to be Peter's confession. 'Christ,' says he, 'bestowed upon Simon the name of Peter: BECAUSE, by the revelation of his hea-

differences: but this he did, as he himself informs us, purely at their own desire, and not by virtue of any divine universal pre-eminent authority attached to his see.—Clem. Rom. Epist. ad Corinth. i. § 1. Such authority Clement no where vindicates to the church of Rome: and, in a passage where he *must* have mentioned it had he supposed himself to possess it, we find him no less silent than Peter and Paul had been before him. Under the Israelitish names of *High Priest* and *Priests* and *Levites*, he distinctly specifies the three holy orders of bishops and presbyters and deacons, and he teaches us, how the apostles regulated and provided for the spiritual government of the church, previous to their own removal to glory.—Ibid. § 40-44. But, though his subject thus plainly and (as it were) inevitably led him to the grand arrangement of the authoritative primacy in his own see of Rome, he passes on to other topics without saying anything on the subject.

The same remark applies to those writings of Ignatius of Antioch, which in the main are received as genuine. He dwells much and repeatedly on the canonical government of the church by the three orders of bishops and presbyters and deacons; and he is very copious on the evil of schism. But, though he thus treats specifically of ecclesiastical polity, and though he often alludes to his journey to Rome for the crown of martyrdom, he throws not out the slightest hint of the existence of any Roman primacy.—Ignat. Epist. ad Ephes. § 2, 5, 6, 20. Epist. ad Magnes. § 3, 6. Epist. ad Trall. § 2, 3, 7.

Equally silent is Polycarp. of Smyrna. In his epistle to the Philippians, he touches on the subject of ecclesiastical discipline: but, as for the duty of ultimate submission to, or special communion with, the alleged Roman successors of Peter, he gives us no information.—Polycarp. Epist. ad Philip. § 5.

'venly father, he confessed him to be the son of God.*

Such is the oldest extant interpretation of the passage: but as we descend, we shall find, that some of the fathers suppose the individual Peter to have been the rock, while others adopt the more ancient interpretation of Justin Martyr.

Irenæus cites the text: but he merely cites it, without giving any exposition of it, either one way or another.†

* Justin. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 255. Sylburg. 1593.

† Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 11. This eminent person has been claimed as a stout advocate for the primacy of Rome: and, though he does not seem to have discovered any such doctrine in the text which speaks of the rock, he certainly allows the church of that city some metropolitan superiority at least in Italy. But his language, I think, cannot be legitimately construed, as setting forth the religious necessity of an universal agreement with, and submission to, the see of Rome. The Latins, I am aware, so interpret it: but they bring out their interpretation, partly by an arbitrary rendering of one particular word, and partly by an omission of the holy father's own exposition of his own meaning.

'To the Roman church,' says Irenæus, 'on account of its more potent principality, it is necessary that every church should resort; that is to say, those of the faithful who dwell on every side of it. For in it, by those who are on every side of it, is thus preserved the tradition which hath descended from the apostles.'—Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3. § 2.

The latter or explanatory part of this passage the Latins are wont to omit in their citation of it: and the former part they are accustomed to translate as follows.

'With the Roman church, on account of its more potent principality, it is necessary that every church should agree.'

I subjoin the entire original, in order that the reader may thus be enabled to form his own judgment.

'Ad hanc ecclesiam, propter potentiorē principalitatem, necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam; hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles: in qua semper, ab his qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quæ ab apostolis traditio.'—Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3. § 2.

Irenæus is not inculcating the necessity of an universal submissive agreement with the church of Rome: but he is teaching the best mode of ascertaining the truth, to which the immediately circumjacent inferior churches could, in his time, resort. At Rome was preserved the authentic autograph of St. Paul's epistle to

Tertullian and Cyprian contend, that Peter individually is the rock: and, while Tertullian is very warm and violent against any extension of the privilege *beyond* the individual Peter; Cyprian's friend and correspondent Firmilian sneers at Stephen of Rome for idly claiming to be the successor of Peter, sets him down as a second Judas, and calls him an arrogant and presumptuous and manifest and notorious fool.*

that church; probably also the autograph of at least the *first* epistle of St. Peter. In the days of Irenæus, moreover, the apostolic tradition, which he himself derived from St. John through his master Polycarp, would be peculiarly exact and vigorous in a church, founded, as he tells us, by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul. On the satisfactory ground, then, of the more potent principality of a church thus circumstanced, Irenæus recommends it to the circumjacent inferior churches, that, in the case of any doctrinal difficulty, they should resort to Rome, partly to inspect the venerable autographs of the apostles, should the strict accuracy of their own copies be suspected, and partly to learn the system of the gospel as it was well known to have been explained by the apostles themselves.

On this topic a flood of light is thrown by Tertullian, the partial contemporary of Irenæus. He mentions, that in all the great apostolic churches were preserved the authentic letters of the apostles which had been addressed to them: and he thence takes occasion to advise the very practice, which the occidental Irenæus specially recommends to those of the faithful who were in the vicinity of the Roman church. But Tertullian dreams not of any peculiar resort to Rome *alone*. On the contrary, let those who are *near* Corinth, go to Corinth; those, who are *near* Philippi, go to Philippi; those who are *near* Ephesus, go to Ephesus; those who are *near* Rome, go to Rome; and those who are *near* Thessalonica, go to Thessalonica. In each of these principal churches, where the apostolic autographs are lodged, and where the pure apostolic tradition eminently flourishes, those, who are in difficulties, may best seek genuine information.—See Tertull. de Præscript. adv. Hæc. § xiv. p. 108, 109.

* In the time of Tertullian, whose life extended into the third century, a considerable advance had plainly been made by the see of Rome in the claim of the primacy. Tertullian calls the bishop of that church *the supreme pontiff*, and dignifies him with the authoritative appellation of *the bishop of bishops*.—Tertull. de Pudic. p. 742. Yet, though a style, alike unknown to the apostolic college and to the earliest fathers, had now begun to be adopted, Tertullian derives no argument in its favour from the

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Chrysostom, in one place, supposes Peter individually to have been the rock: but, what very curiously shews the great uncertainty which prevailed in the early church relative to the true meaning of this famous text, in another place, he pronounces the rock to be Peter's confession of faith, and explicitly condemns the idea that Peter himself could have been intended.†

Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, and Augustine, all agree in preferring the old interpretation which was first given by Justin Martyr. 'The church,' says the great Augustine, 'is founded upon a rock: whence Peter derived his name. For the rock was not so called from Peter; but Peter, from the rock: just as Christ is not so called from a christian; but a christian from Christ. Accordingly, the reason why our Lord said, Upon this rock I will build my church, was, because Peter had said, Thou art the Christ the son of the living God. Upon this rock which thou hast confessed, he means to say, I will build my church. For the rock was Christ, upon which foundation Peter himself was

text now under discussion. He supposes the rock to mean Peter: but he carefully restricts the character to Peter as an *individual*; he deems the privilege to be altogether *personal*; and he flatly denies, that it can be construed as belonging to what then began to be esteemed Peter's church.—Tertull. de Pudic. p. 767, 768.

For the opinion of Cyprian and his friend Firmilian, see Cyprian. de Unit. Eccles. p. 106–108. Cyprian. Epist. Plebi Univers. xliii. p. 83. Firmil. Cyprian. Epist. lxxv. p. 218, 225. In the second of the places here referred to, Cyprian speaks of *one chair founded upon Peter by the voice of the Lord*. This the Latins of course understand to mean the see of Rome. But the whole tenor both of Cyprian's language and of Cyprian's conduct demonstrates, that, by this *chair*, he meant, not *the see of Rome* in particular, but *the chair of the collective united episcopate* in general. Compare Cyprian. de Unit. Eccles. p. 108: and little doubt, I think, will remain as to the true import of the *one chair*.

† Chrysost. Homil. lxi. in Petr. Apost. et Eliam. Proph. Oper. vol. i. p. 856. Serm. de Pentecost. Oper. vol. vi. p. 233.

‘built: inasmuch as it is said, Other foundation can
‘no man lay than what is laid, that is, Christ Jesus.’*

Thus untenable is the second of the two positions, upon which is built the papal claim to an universal supremacy. The primitive church no more recognised any such claim, than Holy Scripture: and, when it began to be propounded by Stephen of Rome in the third century, it was immediately, with the utmost contempt, opposed, as a silly innovation, by Cyprian and Firmilian. Lofty as were Cyprian’s ideas respecting the authority of the collective episcopate, his actions, no less than his words, most abundantly showed, that he was little inclined to prostrate himself before a pretended Roman successor of Peter. In the dispute concerning the rebaptization of heretics, Stephen and Cyprian took opposite parts: and neither of these resolute controversialists would yield, in the slightest degree, to his antagonist. Regardless of the vain anger and the impotent excommunication of the intemperate Italian, Cyprian assembled a synod of the African bishops: and, in this synod, the independent prelate of Carthage, supported by his own suffragans, decreed to adopt the opinion of the Asiatics.

III. The Latin argument, deduced from the celebrated passage which has now been brought under discussion, rests ultimately, as we have seen, upon two vital positions. Both those positions have been shewn to be untenable. The argument, therefore, deprived of its supporters, becomes a mere nullity.

Hence, from what has been said, it is obvious, that

* Athan. *Unum esse Christ.* Orat. Oper. p. 519, 520. Cyril. *Catech.* vi. p. 54. xi. p. 93. Hieron. *Comment.* in Matt. xvi. 18. lib. iii. Oper. vol. vi. p. 33. August. *Expos.* in Evan. Johan. Tract. cxxiv. Oper. vol. ix. p. 206. I have mentioned Cyril among those who hold Peter’s confession to be the rock. Such strikes me as being most naturally his meaning. I will not, however, be positive: he *may* mean the individual Peter. At any rate, he never once thought of interpreting the rock to denote Peter’s imaginary successors in the see of Rome.

we may safely pronounce, by right as well as by fact, the perfect independence, both of the Anglican church and of every other national church, upon the bishop and see of Rome.

1. Such being the case, even if we *wholly* agreed with the Roman church in our general doctrinal system, and even if there were no reason whatever why we might not be in *perfect* communion with her; still that circumstance would give her no sort of *authority* over the church of England.

According to the principle of Cyprian, that *the episcopate is one indivisible body*, and that *the church catholic is spiritually an unit, though consisting of many distinct visible portions*: according to this principle of Cyprian, any union of the church of Rome and the church of England, even if such an union were doctrinally practicable, must needs be an union of equal concordance, not an union of rule on the one side, and of submission on the other.*

The very fact indeed of the perfect mutual independence, though entire theological agreement, of the holy apostles, draws after it, by a plain necessity, the perfect mutual independence of all national churches. For, if the apostles themselves were mutually independent, no very intelligible reason can be assigned, why a church founded by James or by John should be subject to a church founded by Paul or by Peter.

2. It may be said, that the church of England is a daughter of the church of Rome, and that as such she ought to be subject to her spiritual mother.

If this theory were admissible, it *might* prove the schism and rebellion of the Anglican church, but it would *not* prove the schism and rebellion of the Greek church, which yet, as we all know, is *equally* insisted upon by the uncanonically-encroaching Latins.

The theory, however, is palpably inadmissible.

* See Cyprian de Unit. Eccles. p. 108.

By an easy figure of speech, we very naturally, in ecclesiastical matters, talk of the relation of mother and daughter: but it were grievously inconclusive reasoning to demonstrate, from a trope of rhetoric, the literal subjugation of the allegorical daughter to the allegorical mother. The episcopal churches of Scotland and America are two hopeful daughters, whereof their mother, the church of England, has no reason to feel ashamed: yet it were passing strange, if the parent should, as a parent, claim any spiritual domination over her children. Happily, the mother and her daughters are in perfect communion: and long, for their mutual benefit and spiritual edification, may such continue to be the case! But their communion is an union of equal concordance, not an union of rule and submission: and, if there unhappily exist not the same communion between Rome and England, the fault, we venture to think, is in the mother, not in the daughter.

3. The Vatican, then, can claim no canonical superiority to Lambeth, even on the supposition that there existed the most perfect doctrinal harmony between the two churches.

Some protestants, not quite so well informed as they might have been in the ancient genuine principle of ecclesiastical union; that principle, which has been so happily revived in the case of the three episcopal churches of England, Scotland, and America: some protestants, it seems, have unguardedly argued with the bishop of Aire, that their avowed independence of Rome is no schism, if the Latins be idolaters.

His lordship, whose acuteness will not suffer an opponent to make a slip with impunity, takes these paralogists at their word, and rapidly assails them on their own most erroneous principle.

You confess yourselves to be schismatics, says he, if we Latins be not idolaters: for upon our alleged idolatry alone you avowedly rest your argu-

ment. Now we Latins are *not* idolaters. Therefore, on your own principle, you are convicted schismatics.*

Without entering, even in the slightest degree, into the question, whether idolatry be justly or unjustly imputed to the Church of Rome, I deny the very premises of this syllogism, on the ground which I have already explained quite sufficiently. We should cordially rejoice, if the doctrine of the church of Rome were in all points identical with the doctrine of the church of England: but we should not, on *that* account, the more perceive why the church of *Eng-*land ought to be *subject* to the church of Rome.

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 301.

CHAPTER IV.

Respecting the Practicability of an Union of the Church of Rome and the Church of England.

It is remarked by the bishop of Aire, that he *might* have copiously discussed the errors taught by protestants, respecting the number of the sacred books, the number of the sacraments, the communion under both kinds, the reservation of the consecrated host, and other matters of importance. On these topics, however, he is silent. I, therefore, shall be silent also: for my purpose has been, not so much to volunteer an attack, as to accept a challenge. But a projected plan of union, between the church of Rome and the church of England, wears no face of hostility: and it is refreshing, toward the close of a controversial composition, to hear the long-forgotten sounds of peace and amity.*

I. The bishop's scheme of union, between the two churches, may be stated briefly, in manner following:

'Once defined, the principles of the Latin church are *irrevocable*. She herself is *immutably* chained by bonds, which at no future period can she ever 'rend asunder.'† In regard, therefore, to *doctrine*, any concession is plainly impossible. Yet, as the bishop undertakes to promise for her, she will cheerfully do every thing that in reason can be expected. Let the church of England adopt ALL the *doctrines* of the

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xviii.

† Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 324.

church of Rome: and the church of Rome, on her part, will be disposed to make grand concessions on points of *discipline*. Such concessions her principle of *IMMUTABILITY* does not forbid. Hence, in return for the sacrifice which we make on doctrinal points, she will freely concede to us communion under both kinds, the marriage of ecclesiastics, divine service in the vulgar tongue, all the ceremonies, all the vestments, all the sacerdotal ornaments, all the decorations of the altars and churches. By this arrangement, as the bishop justly observes, matters would *seem* precisely the same as before. The change would be absolutely invisible. It would be a simple alteration of our faith, which resides only in the intellectual part of our nature: while the external worship would strike the eye, exactly as it did before the union was thus happily effected.*

‘In England,’ says the bishop, ‘the Reformation deprived public worship of its ancient forms, and stripped ecclesiastical ceremonies of all their majesty. At one fell swoop, it abolished the merit of satisfactory works, the doctrine of purgatory, prayers for the dead, invocation of the saints, honour paid to relics and to images and to the cross. The ritual, the liturgy, the mass with its sacrifice, the real presence with transubstantiation, all were swept away. Not a particle was saved; and England wondered to find herself suddenly become calvinistic.’†

Until instructed by the bishop, I was not aware, that England had even yet discovered the calvinism of her church: neither was I aware, that, in denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, we denied also the doctrine of the real though spiritual presence of the Lord. This, however, is a matter of inferior moment, so far as the present question is concerned.

The bishop of Aire vituperatively enumerates the

* *Discuss. Amic.* vol. ii. p. 403.

† *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 5.

ravages of the Reformation in England, and assures us that the principles of the Latin church are *immutable* and *irrevocable*. In order, therefore, to an union with the church of Rome, we must carefully, except in so far as we are indulged with respect to discipline, replace whatever the Reformation has abolished. Let the church of England, then, admit the merit of satisfactory works, inculcate a belief in purgatory, enjoin prayers for the dead, establish the invocation of the saints, adore with their due honour relics and images and crosses, adopt into her liturgy what was erased at the time of the Reformation, and require of her children an unhesitating reception of the doctrine of transubstantiation with all its concomitants: let the church of England pay this price for the procurement of an union with the church of Rome; and such an union will forthwith be accomplished. If we like the terms propounded by the bishop of Aire, nothing more is wanted than a prompt payment of the price.

II. Sincerely do I wish, that a scheme of greater promise had been recommended by the excellent prelate. The present, as marked out by himself, is assuredly a mere theological chimera.

1. We are called upon, it seems, to adopt implicitly the **ENTIRE** creed and consequent practice of Rome: and, in return, we may entertain a hope of being indulged in various matters of discipline, the full possession of which privilege we *already* enjoy.

Now, by such arrangement, *we* obviously concede **EVERY** thing: and the only advantage, which we receive from our concession, is the benefit of subjecting the bishops and clergy of the Anglican church to the spiritual domination of a foreign Italian bishop. Thus, even if the terms were unexceptionable, it is difficult to comprehend what particular advantage *we* should derive from the arrangement.

The bishop will probably state the benefit to be

the accomplishment of union and the termination of schism.

These, in themselves, may be advantages: but I perceive not, why their sole purchase must be *unconditional submission to an Italian prelate*. According to the principles of the early church which held the episcopate to be one, the idea of *communion* does not involve the idea of *subjection*. Canterbury claims not to govern Rome: and it is by no means clear, why Rome should claim to govern Canterbury. If an union between the two churches be ever effected, it must be upon the basis of *a perfect independent equality*.

2. But, in truth, the very terms, propounded by the bishop, are altogether inadmissible. Because the principles of the Latin church are pronounced to be **IRREVOCABLE**, we Anglicans, without the slightest regard being paid to *our* principles, are required to adopt implicitly the **ENTIRE** creed and practice of Rome.

How, then, is such an adoption to be effected? Even to omit the singular unreasonableness of a proposal, that every doctrinal sacrifice shall be made on one side *exclusively*; how are we to make this sacrifice, unless we be first conscientiously satisfied as to its propriety? At present we are *not* convinced, that the entire creed of Rome is scriptural. On the contrary, we hold it to be a mixture of truth and error. With these sentiments, can the bishop seriously wish us to adopt it? Can so good a man, as the exemplary prelate of Aire, deliberately recommend to us the practice of gross deceptive hypocrisy? Certainly, if with our present doctrinal views we should take such a step, our dishonesty would reflect but small credit upon our ostensible conversion. Let the bishop by solid proof and sound argument convince us, that the entire creed of Rome is undoubted scriptural verity: and we shall require no lengthened exhortation to an union with that church. But our union

must be preceded by our conviction: and I feel assured, that the bishop himself would be dissatisfied with any union which should be differently circumstanced.

3. There is yet another difficulty, which his lordship, in the rapid zeal of a projector, seems to have entirely overlooked.

‘Every thing which has been done in the Anglican church since the time of Elizabeth,’ says the bishop, ‘is radically null in principle; null to-day, null to-morrow, null to the very end of time.’*

If we ask the reason of this alarming nullity, the bishop refers us to the marriage of Scory and Barlow and Coverdale. The marriage of these prelates obliterated their episcopal character. But from them our English orders are derived. Therefore, our English orders, springing from a nullity, are themselves radically null in principle.†

The soundness of this extraordinary reasoning I have already had occasion to controvert: at present, I mention it only for the purpose of bringing it in juxtaposition with his lordship’s plan of conceding the privilege of matrimony to the English ecclesiastics, in case an union with Rome should ever be happily effected.

Now his argument and his proposal, when jointly considered, bring him, so far as I can judge, into a very singular dilemma.

The marriage of bishops either does, or does not, obliterate their episcopal character. If it does; then the marriage of the clergy cannot be conceded without their virtual degradation: if it does not; then our English orders are perfectly valid, and the bishop is clearly mistaken in his remark, that every thing done in the Anglican church since the time of Elizabeth is radically null in principle.‡

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 408.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 11.

‡ I am not altogether devoid of apprehension, that the bishop of Aire, by his proposal to concede to the English ecclesiastics

4. His lordship dwells largely on the alleged ignorance of our Anglican reformers in regard to eccle-

the privilege of matrimony, may have unwittingly incurred the grave charge of manifest heresy.

By the sixth canon of the second Council of Lateran, all ecclesiastics, down to the rank of the subdiaconate inclusive, are prohibited from marrying: and this prohibition is made to rest, not upon a mere point of changeable discipline, but upon the eternally unchangeable ground of alleged immorality; for the marriage of ecclesiastics is affirmed to be an unworthy deed, and is thence asserted to be nothing better than *chambering and uncleanness*. Concil. Lateran. secund. can. vi. Labb. Concil. Sacrosanct. vol. x. p. 1003.

Now the second Council of Lateran is reckoned as the tenth ecumenical council. Hence, on the principle of the Roman church, it must assuredly be deemed infallible. Such being the case, the bishop of Aire has plainly reduced himself to the following most unsatisfactory dilemma:—

If he believe the decision of the second Council of Lateran to be infallibly true; then he purposes to confer upon the English clergy the unhallowed privilege of chambering and uncleanness: if he believe the marriage of ecclesiastics to be as free from immorality as the marriage of laics; then, with a high hand, he impugns the infallibility of the second Council of Lateran.

The bishop, in short, by his unlucky proposal, must be content to stand forth, either as the patron of chambering and uncleanness, or as the heretical opponent of the tenth ecumenical council.

For my own part, I see not how the church of Rome can ever decently concede to the clergy the privilege of matrimony, without first rescinding the sixth and seventh canons of the second Council of Lateran. But, if the canons of an ecumenical council be rescinded on the ground that they have *falsely* declared the marriage of ecclesiastics to be mere chambering and uncleanness; it is difficult to conceive, how the infallibility of the church can be ever afterward consistently maintained. A protestant can scarcely forbear smiling at the whimsical and multiplied difficulties, into which the *ignis fatuus* of ecclesiastical infallibility is perpetually conducting his Latin brethren. It meets them at every turn of the controversy: and it invariably leaves them floundering on one of those unseemly quagmires, which are scattered with such unhappy profusion over the whole patrimony of St. Peter. Perhaps there is not a more worthy man breathing than the bishop of Aire, or one who would more utterly abhor the very idea of immorality: and yet we see in what evil plight the chase of infallibility has left him. He proposes to grant to the English clergy, what the second Council of Lateran has infallibly pronounced to be chambering and uncleanness.

siastical antiquity: and he contrasts it with the profound erudition of Bull and Pearson and Beveridge; 'for whom,' as he truly remarks, 'christian antiquity had no secrets.'*

Such is his statement: but he draws from it the very unexpected conclusion, that, rejecting the ignorance of our reformers, we should forthwith renounce our articles and our homilies, and court a reconciliation with the church of Rome.

The bishop's conclusion surprised me not a little: and I was the rather surprised, because, from his premises, I should myself have been carried to a directly opposite result.

Ridley and Latimer (I should have argued), probably moreover Cranmer and Jewell, though they do not appear to have been exactly what we might call *ignorant men*, were yet perhaps unequal in erudition to Bull and Pearson and Beveridge. What then am I to think of the English reformation, whereof they may not unreasonably be deemed the fathers? *They*, we will argue with the bishop of Aire, were simple men, who groped their way through darkness with what modicum of light they haply possessed, and who perhaps were more frequently in the wrong than in the right. But the matter wears quite a different aspect, when such men as Bull and Pearson and Beveridge make their appearance. For *them*, christian antiquity had no secrets: *they* penetrated into the very adytum of the temple: *they* explored its most recondite mysteries. Yet did these giants of erudition adopt and sanction what their more simple predecessors had done so ignorantly and incautiously. They adorned and defended the church, which the others had purified and reformed. Their superior information led them not to perceive that necessity of an union with Rome, which, according to the bishop of Aire, a deep knowledge of christian

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 397, 398.

antiquity must perforce inculcate. They lived and died faithful and devout rulers of the church of England. Such being the case, what more satisfactory proof can a plain unlettered man have, that increase of knowledge does *not* teach the advantage of submission to Rome, than the conduct of persons for whom confessedly christian antiquity had no secrets?

Thus, through the medium of *facts*, I should have inclined to argue from the bishop's premises: they bring his lordship, however, to a totally different conclusion. He infers from them the duty and benefit of a speedy submission to Rome.

How, then, are we to dispose of Bishop Bull and his learned colleagues: for it is clear, that *they* grievously impede our journey to the Vatican?

His lordship makes short work with Bishop Bull: and, from analogy, I conclude, that we must employ the same compendious process in the matter of Pearson and Beveridge.

For a laborious investigation of the doctrine of the antenicensine fathers on the subject of the Holy Trinity, the praise of Bishop Bull is in all the churches. Now, the accurate acquaintance of that great prelate with the works of the early ecclesiastical writers *ought*, in the judgment of the bishop of Aire, to have brought him over to the church of Rome. But that most desirable event *never did* take place. *Therefore* it follows, that Bishop Bull was far too sober and prudent a man to suffer his convictions to interfere with his interest.

So speaks and so reasons the bishop of Aire in a composition specially addressed to the English laity.*

* Qu'est-ce donc qui le retient? says the bishop of Aire respecting his learned brother of St. David's. Qui l'arrête? Déplorable foiblesse! L'aveu de la vérité tout entière l'eût exposé à de trop grands sacrifices. Discuss. Amic. vol. i. p. 435.

The bishop, as if by a simultaneous movement with his friends in England, condescends to repeat the now ancient calumny of

5. As the bishop lays the deep foundations of our English reform, in the profound ignorance of the reformers themselves; so is he willing to ascribe its otherwise unaccountable permanence to the scarcely less profound ignorance of those birds of darkness, our modern Anglican clergy.*

The solution of the problem is certainly more ingenious than flattering. Were we *better* informed, we should lose no time in undertaking a journey to Rome: being *ill* informed, we are content, in the bliss of unmingled ignorance, to stay at home.

Every Gallican divine is not a bishop of Aire: surely then, in common equity, his lordship must not pronounce us Anglicans a generation of absolute theological dunces, because every well-meaning clerk is not a Bull or a Pearson or a Beveridge. After all, so far as the church of Rome is concerned, perhaps it were wisest in the bishop to leave us as we are. He requests his laic correspondent to perplex us with shrewd questions from the fathers; but, on second thoughts, he is willing to spare us our embarrassment.† Now my own suspicion is, that, the more we read the old ecclesiastics, the less we shall be perplexed by any shrewd questions. Whence it seems not unnaturally to follow, that the study of antiquity is adverse, rather than friendly, to the cause of the Latin church. Such, at least, unless we adopt the solution proposed by the bishop, seems to have been its effect upon Bull and upon Pearson, upon Hooker and upon Beveridge.

Mr. Gibbon, that our English clergy sign the thirty-nine articles with a sigh or a smile. *Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 400.*

My regret, that the same utterly unfounded calumny should have been re-echoed even by so estimable a man as Mr. Butler, is considerably diminished, when I recollect, that it has called forth the vindication of the present bishop of Chester.

* *Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 399—403, 409.*

† *Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 8.*

CHAPTER V.

Respecting the Bishop of Aire's Censure of the Reformation, his Apology for the Inquisition, and his Protest against Freedom of Religious Worship.

WITH whatever reluctance, I must now prepare myself to attend upon the bishop of Aire in considering his censure of the Reformation, his apology for the inquisition, and his protest against freedom of religious worship. Yet the task, though unpleasant, will not be useless. We shall thence distinctly learn the true character of the church of Rome. Since the bishop of Aire, as a Latin ecclesiastic, does not blush to advocate principles the most revolting; what must the system be, which can thus corrupt the mind even of a Trévern!*

I. The bishop's censure of the Reformation is built upon the manifold evils which are said to have resulted from it. His argument may be briefly stated in manner following:—

Various religious wars, among which the bishop specially mentions that which ended in the liberation of Holland from the yoke of Spain; and various sanguinary persecutions, among which he specially enumerates the massacre that occurred on the eve of St. Bartholomew: these wars and these persecutions would never have taken place, had they not been preceeded by the Reformation. For such miseries, therefore, the Reformation alone is answerable. The blood of

* Discuss. Amic. Lett. xviii.

the protestants, who perished in the flames of a pseudo-martyrdom, be upon their own heads! The blood both of protestants and of papists, which flowed in battle, be also on the heads of the protestants! In this matter, the enemies of the Reformation are clear. They have nothing wherewithal to reproach themselves. Had the protestants never opposed the church of Rome, not a finger would have been raised against them. Nothing, therefore, can be more evident, than that the papists are perfectly blameless: nothing can be better established, than the exclusive guilt of the protestants.*

From such a train of reasoning the bishop is brought to the triumphant conclusion, that the Reformation of the sixteenth century is an event which must ever be deplored and reprobated.

‘It seems to me impossible,’ says his lordship, ‘that these observations on the political effects of the Reformation in Europe can do otherwise than inspire every impartial man with a strong aversion from it. In its partisans, they must needs weaken an attachment and an interest, which are solely produced by the prejudices of education. They must infallibly terminate in a hearty wish, that it may be abandoned with all convenient celerity.’†

We may certainly pronounce with perfect truth, that the various evils, enumerated by the bishop, would never have occurred, had not a reformation preceded them: but, whether it be altogether just to make this reformation *answerable* for them, is a matter by no means equally self-evident. His lordship’s argument is one of those ill-constructed machines, which are calculated to do quite as much mischief among friends as among enemies: and, if the Reformation is to be condemned on the principle advocated

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 411—416.

† Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 417, 418.

by the bishop, I tremble for the security of christianity itself.

Bad as the Reformation may be, it at least, in its effects, is not much worse than christianity. The argument by which the bishop of Aire demonstrates that we ought to detest and abhor the Reformation, will no less demonstrate, that christianity ought to be visited with an equal share of our virtuous hatred. Did not the very founder of this religion give a true account of it, when he declared, that he came to send upon the earth, not peace, but a sword? Who, in all just reason, were to blame? The persecuting Romans? or the persecuted christians? If the latter had not fantastically abandoned the religion of their forefathers; they would never, by the former, have been in the slightest degree molested. What bloodshed, what murders, what tortures, what imprisonments, what tumults did christianity introduce! Most accurately were its early votaries stigmatized by the judicious and discerning Hebrews, as the mischief-loving persons who turned the world upside down! Assuredly, the fruitful parent of all these evils was christianity: for, had christianity never existed, neither would the evils, its consequents, have existed; inasmuch as the cause must always precede the effect. 'To me, therefore,' an ancient pagan would argue, in the words and on the principle of the bishop of Aire: 'to me it seems impossible, that these observations on the effects of christianity can do otherwise than inspire every impartial man with a strong aversion from it. In its partisans, they must needs weaken an attachment and an interest, which are solely produced by the prejudices of education or by the fanaticism of recent conversion. They must infallibly terminate in a hearty wish, that it may be abandoned with all convenient celerity.'

Thus, with materials furnished by the bishop of Aire, might Julian in the fourth century have argued

against christianity: and, so far as I am able to judge, if the reasoning of the Gallican prelate against the Reformation be conclusive, the supposed analogical reasoning of the Roman emperor against christianity cannot be inconclusive.

II. As the bishop censures the Reformation, because its bitter fruits were massacres and bloodshed and war and torture and persecution: so, with strict consistency, he vindicates and apologizes for the Inquisition.

'Some persons,' says he, 'accuse it (and would to heaven there was less ground for the accusation!) of having pushed rigour even to injustice and cruelty. But it is not reasonable to confound the Inquisition with its abuse. We must not attribute to the Inquisition itself those crimes, for which its officers alone are culpable. It is at present generally agreed, that the number of innocent victims has been greatly exaggerated. After all, Spain, though she may reproach herself with all these cruel and unjust persecutions, has no great reason to regret the lot of other states. Religious wars, produced by the Reformation, have deluged them with blood. But Spain, blessed with the Inquisition, has been happily exempt.'*

1. The crimes, which have been perpetrated by the Inquisition, the bishop would charge, not upon the Inquisition itself, but upon its officers.

If those officers, who (according to his lordship) *alone* are culpable, had ever been punished as they deserved; the defence of the Inquisition, avowedly set up on this special plea, might possibly, to some certain extent at least, have availed. But, as to any penalties being ever suffered by those hardened miscreants, or even as to any censure being officially passed upon them by their ecclesiastical superiors, the bishop is altogether silent. I will not venture to say,

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 417.

that inquisitors have *never* been animadverted upon; but I can safely affirm, that I never *heard* of such an occurrence; and since this precise matter is the very thing wanted to complete the bishop's argument, from his ominous silence I more than suspect that he is as little acquainted with any such occurrence as myself. Hence, even upon his own principle, unless he can show that the culpable officers of the Inquisition have invariably been brought to condign punishment, we must assuredly ascribe to the Inquisition *itself* every crime which has been perpetrated by its abandoned instruments. If its tools are suffered to escape with impunity, the Inquisition makes *their* abominations its own, and henceforth incurs the whole weight of a most awful responsibility.

2. Equally unavailing is the palliation attempted by the bishop, on the ground that the number of innocent victims has been greatly exaggerated.

In the very terms of this plea there is a disingenuousness, which is unworthy of such a man as the prelate of Aire. *The number of INNOCENT victims*, we are told, *has been greatly exaggerated*: but the bishop is not careful to define what he means by *innocent* victims. I may be mistaken: but I have always understood, that the special object of the Inquisition was to take cognizance of what the Latin church pronounces to be heresy. Hence, if the bishop be a true son of that church, no person, whom *she* determines to be a heretic, can be deemed by his lordship *an INNOCENT victim*; and, consequently, the fact, that, *within the space of thirty years, the Inquisition destroyed, by various modes of torture, one hundred and fifty thousand reputed heretics*, may be perfectly consistent with the somewhat fallacious allegation that *the number of INNOCENT victims has been greatly exaggerated*.* The true question is: What are we to

* For this appalling fact, Verger, who knew the Inquisition well, is my voucher: See Fran. Jun. et Tilen. ad Bellarmin. de Pont. Rom. lib. iii. c. 7, apud Medi Oper. p. 504.

understand by the word *innocent*, as employed by the bishop? If by *INNOCENT victims* his lordship means *reputed heretics*, that is to say, *persons deemed heretics by the church of Rome*: then there has certainly been no exaggeration. If, on the contrary, by *INNOCENT victims* he means *some few unlucky papists who in an evil hour have been mistaken for damnable heretics*: then he ought to have explained himself accordingly, that so the purport of his allegation might be clearly and distinctly understood. His complete silence on this most important point compels me, however reluctantly, to tax him with palpable disingenuousness.

3. There is, however, yet another aspect under which the bishop's attempted apology for the Inquisition is altogether unsuccessful.

Since the apology proceeds on the ground, that the slaughter of *INNOCENT victims* is *alone* indefensible; it follows, by inevitable implication, that the Inquisition is perfectly justified in the slaughter of *GUILTY victims*.

Now the *GUILTY victims* are those, whom the Latin church, on full conviction of their guilt, has pronounced to be *heretics*. In the slaughter of *such* persons, therefore, according to the necessary tenor of the bishop's argument, the Inquisition is fully justified.

But this is the very point, on which I have the privilege or the misfortune to differ from his lordship.

Many have been slaughtered by the Inquisition, whom *the bishop* deems heretics, and whom *I* deem good christians: some also have been slaughtered by the Inquisition, whom both *the bishop* and *myself* deem heretics. But yet, according to my own view of the question, *EVERY* person, slaughtered by the Inquisition, was, most certainly, so far as the judicial right of that pandemonium is concerned, an *INNOCENT victim*. Man, for his religious opinions, is answerable to God alone. Those opinions may be

very erroneous and very detestable: the individual may be a grievous spiritual sinner before his Creator; and, in the hour of doom an awful retribution may await him. But where has the Lord of heaven and of earth conferred upon a pope or upon an inquisitor the right to torture and to destroy that man? I greatly mistake, if the charter of any such judicial right can be found under the christian dispensation: Yet, unless this charter can be produced, EVERY death occasioned by the Inquisition, no matter what the religious principles of the individual may have been, is clearly a murder.*

* I sincerely pity the situation of the bishop of Aire and of every other humane and well-disposed member of the church of Rome. All such persons are inevitably pledged, either to *vindicate and to practise persecution even to the last dreadful extremity, or to deny the cherished infallibility of their immutable church.*

Respecting the bounden duty of all the faithful to annoy and distress and injure and persecute and slaughter those unfortunate religionists whom the Latin church has pronounced to be heretics, the twenty-seventh canon of the third Council of Lateran, held at Rome under Pope Alexander the third in the year 1179, and reputed by all devout Romanists to be the eleventh general council, is full and peremptory and explicit and unambiguous.

'As the blessed Leo says, although ecclesiastical discipline, content with sacerdotal judgment, does not exact bloody vengeance; yet is it assisted by the constitution of catholic princes, in order that men, while they fear that corporal punishment may be inflicted upon them, may often seek a salutary remedy. On this account, because in Gascony, Albi, in the parts of Toulouse, and in other regions, the accursed perverseness of heretics, variously denominated *Cathari* or *Patarenes* or *Publicani*, or distinguished by sundry other names, has so prevailed; that now they no longer exercise their wickedness in private, but publicly manifest their error and seduce into their communion the simple and infirm: we therefore subject to a curse both themselves and their defenders and their harbourers; and, under a curse, we prohibit all persons from admitting them into their houses, or receiving them upon their lands, or cherishing them, or exercising any trade with them. Moreover we enjoin all the faithful, for the remission of their sins, that they manfully oppose themselves to such calamities, and that they defend the christian people against them by arms. And let their goods be confiscated, and let it be freely permitted to princes to reduce men of such a stamp to slavery.—We likewise, from the meroy

III. The bishop having thus censured the Reformation and vindicated the Inquisition, nothing more was wanting to the rotundity of his system than that he should bear his testimony against freedom of religious worship. Accordingly, against this crying abomination of the Anglican church his lordship has raised his voice like a trumpet.

1. In her own bosom, we are assured, the too

‘of God, and relying upon the authority of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, relax two years of enjoined penance to those faithful christians, who, by the counsel of the bishops or other prelates, *shall take up arms against them to subdue them by fighting against them*; or, if such christians shall spend a longer time in the business, we leave it to the discretion of the bishops to grant them a longer indulgence. As for those, who shall fail to obey the admonition of the bishop to this effect, we inhibit them from a participation of the body and blood of the Lord. Meanwhile, those, who in the ardour of faith shall undertake the just labour of subduing them, we receive into the protection of the church; granting to them the same privileges of security in property and in person, as are granted to those who visit the holy sepulchre.’—Labb. Concil. Sacrosan. vol. x. p. 1522, 1523.

If a Romanist hold the infallibility of his church, then he is compelled by this infallible decree of an infallible council, duly ratified by the pope himself, both to vindicate persecution in theory, and zealously to promote it in practice: if he abhor persecution in theory, and if he refuse to promote it in practice; then he is compelled, by this very abhorrence and refusal, to pronounce an infallible council to have grievously erred, and thence of necessity to deny the infallibility of his church.

From this dilemma I see no possibility of evasion: and, accordingly, no evasion is attempted.

‘When a dogmatical point is to be determined,’ says the late Bishop Walmesley, ‘the catholic church speaks but once; and *her decree is irrevocable*. The solemn determinations of general councils have remained *unalterable and will ever be so*.—Gen. Hist. of the Church, chap. ix. p. 224. Dublin, 1812.

‘The principles of the catholic church, once defined,’ says the bishop of Aire, ‘are *irrevocable*. She herself is *immutably* chained ‘by bonds, which at *no* future period can she *ever* rend asunder.’—Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 324.

Thus speak two *modern* Latin ecclesiastics: and from their statement it is manifest that the *persecuting* twenty-seventh canon of the third Council of Lateran, itself the reputed eleventh *general* council, is **IRREVOCABLE and IMMUTABLE both now and for ever.**

tolerant church of England madly cherishes and fondly carries the viperine principle of her own destruction. The adder, which she thus warms only for the purpose of stinging herself to death, is *freedom of religious worship*: and the mode, by which this baleful and impolitic principle operates to her dissolution, is in the uncontrolled secession of the dissenters and above all in the rapid accumulation of the methodists. •

What the bishop censures in the church of England is a principle which the church of Rome has ever abhorred. The very fact of his censure demonstrates, by a necessary implication, that any *such* censure of the Latin church would be wholly unmerited: for, if the existing principle of the Latin church were the *same* as the existing principle of the English church, it is clear, that his lordship's censure could not have been directed against the latter *exclusively*. When the bishop declares, that the English church carries in her bosom a principle which must finally produce her destruction; he in effect declares, that the Latin church is far too wise and too politic to entertain and to harbour such a viper: for it were plain fatuity to censure the practice of the English church, if it were *equally* the practice of the Latin church. But the principle in question is **FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP**. Therefore, in the judgment of the bishop of Aire, **FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP** is a foolish and impolitic principle, which no wise church would tolerate as she values her own safety, and which accordingly the sagacious church of Rome does *not* tolerate.

2. The future destiny of the church of England neither the bishop nor myself can with certainty prognosticate.

To the Catholic church in general Christ has promised perpetuity; but, in the lapse of ages, any particular church may perish. Should the church of England fall by the fickleness and defection of her

children, the principle, which destroys, will at least not disgrace her! should the church of Rome be established upon her ruins; those, who have indirectly contributed to her destruction, will have small reason to congratulate themselves. A church, which is censured for *granting* freedom of religious worship, were ill exchanged for the church which *censures* her impolicy.

3. Some modern *protestants* are wont very innocently to maintain, that the church of Rome is now quite different from her ancient self. But when did we hear a *Latin* profess that his church had changed? NEVER.

In proof of the immutability of the Roman church, I cite not the wild and furious declamation of some vulgar fanatic: I turn to a scholar and a gentleman: I adduce the present bishop of Aire.

'The principles of the Latin church, once defined, are *irrevocable*. She herself is *immutably* chained by bonds, which at *no* future period can she *ever* rend asunder.'*

Thus speaks a very estimable Roman ecclesiastic: and his meaning is fully explained by the line of argument which he himself has chosen. He calls upon us to unite, or rather to submit, to his church: and, as the consistent advocate of that church, he vindicates idolatry, stigmatizes the Reformation, patronises the eve of St. Bartholomew, lays the blame of persecution upon the persecuted, palliates the Inquisition, and censures freedom of religious worship.

The English laity are no longer ignorant of the price of an union with Rome. Should the terms please them, nothing remains save to strike the bargain.

4. If a reconciliation can thus happily be effected, the bishop of Aire promises, that all the prelates of the alone true catholic church will spring from their

* Discuss. Amic. vol. ii. p. 324.

chairs of office, and request the parochial clergy of England to take their places.†

Certainly, to us plain rural divines, whose merit has hitherto been overlooked by undiscerning patrons, and whose humility has never been endangered by the flattering offer of ecclesiastical dignities, such a proposal is no ordinary temptation: yet, if the episcopate can only be obtained by an union with a professedly intolerant church, I trust we shall all have sufficient virtue to pronounce the *Nolo episcopari*.

Much as we regret the secession of the dissenters, and the half-separation of the methodists, and fully agreeing with the bishop that such unhappy divisions have a direct tendency to promote the interest of the church of Rome, still we cannot conscientiously purchase the dignities which are thus freely offered to us. Since the price is the adoption of the whole Latin creed on the one hand, and the entire extinction of all freedom of religious worship on the other hand: such a price, for *our* scanty means, we find to be far too costly.

† Si les grâces, les honneurs, manquoient encore à son empressement de vous en revêtir, nos évêques sauroient bien, à l'exemple de leurs anciens prédécesseurs, descendre de leurs sièges et vous presser d'y monter à leur place. Epît. Dedic. au Clergé. p. 8, 9.

CHAPTER VI.

Conclusion.

To follow the example of the bishop of Aire, in giving a recapitulation of what has been said, does not appear to me to be necessary. The plan, in general, is an excellent one: and I have rarely seen it better executed than by his lordship. But, in my own particular case at present, I deem it superfluous. If my statement of facts and authorities fail of leaving a distinct impression upon the mind, no recapitulation will render it more luminous.

I have now met the bishop of Aire on ground selected by himself. With what success I have met him, let others decide. In bidding farewell to my learned and respectable opponent, he cannot be offended, if I express a hearty wish, by way of furthering his projected union, that his church may more and more resemble that portrait of it, which at the close of the second century was drawn from the life by the eloquent and gifted Tertullian.

‘Happy, thrice-happy, church! To thee, the apostles
‘with their own blood, profusely communicated their
‘whole doctrine. There Peter was assimilated to the
‘passion of his Lord: there Paul was crowned by the
‘evasion of John: there John himself, after suffering
‘no ill from the boiling cauldron, was banished to
‘Patmos. What learned she; what taught she:
‘when, symbolizing also with the African churches,
‘she acknowledged one God the Creator of the uni-
‘verse, and Jesus Christ the Son of God the Creator

‘born from the Virgin Mary, and the future appoint-
‘ed resurrection of the flesh? She mingles the law
‘and the prophets with the gospels and the apostolic
‘letters: whence she drinks out that faith, which she
‘so eminently illustrates. She signs with water: she
‘clothes with the Holy Spirit: she feeds with the
‘Eucharist: she exhorts to martyrdom: she receives
‘no one in opposition to the institutes, which Christ
‘once delivered to his church. Still do the very
‘chairs of the apostles remain in their own places:
‘still are their authentic letters recited, which sound
‘forth their very tones, and which faithfully exhibit
‘their very countenances. If thou art in *Achaia*,
‘thou hast Corinth: if, in *Macedon*; thou hast *Philippi*
‘and *Thessalonica*. If thou journeyest into *Asia*;
‘thou hast *Ephesus*: if *Italy* be thy residence; thou
‘hast *ROME*.*

* *Tertull. de Præscript. adv. Hær. § xiv. p. 108, 109.*

APPENDIX.



RESPECTING THE AUTHENTIC LETTERS OF THE APOSTLES MENTIONED BY TERTULLIAN.

It has been disputed, whether the *ipsæ authenticæ literæ*, mentioned by Tertullian in his treatise on Prescriptions, were *the autographs of the apostles*, or only *accurate transcripts of them*.*

From his expression, *Percurre ecclesias APOSTOLICAS*, when viewed in connexion with the subsequent context and with the avowed tenor of his argument, we may, I think, collect, that he speaks of *the apostolic autographs*.

I. Of this opinion, I draw out the proof, in manner following:—

The passage is introduced with the supposed case of a person, who, for his soul's health, is laudably curious to ascertain sound christian doctrine. *Age jam qui voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuæ.* Now the advice, which Tertullian gives to such a person, is, that he should resort to the APOSTOLIC churches, in which the authentic letters of the apostles are still recited: and these APOSTOLIC churches are evidently

* Tertull. de Præscript. adv. Hær. § xiv. p. 108, 109. See above, book ii. chap. 3; § II. 2. note.

churches founded by the apostles themselves, as contra-distinguished from minor churches founded only by their successors; for he immediately afterward explains himself by enumerating the churches of Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus, and Rome. But of necessity this advice implies, that the inquirer after sound doctrine would find in these APOSTOLIC churches what he would *not* find in any other inferior churches: and the matters, which he would find in these APOSTOLIC churches for the settling of his faith, are distinctly specified to be the very authentic letters of the apostles; *ipsæ authenticæ literæ eorum*.

What then must we consistently understand by these *very authentic letters of the apostles*?

If we understand by them *accurate transcripts of the original autographs*, we shall be reduced, by the tenor of Tertullian's argument, to the manifest absurdity of supposing, that, at the latter end of the second century, no churches possessed transcripts of the original autographs, save those APOSTOLIC churches to which the letters were directly addressed: for it is clear that Tertullian would never have thought of sending his inquirer *specially and exclusively* to the APOSTOLIC churches, if the very same satisfactory information might have been gained from any other *inferior* church. Hence, the bare reason of the thing makes it evident, that the *ipsæ authenticæ literæ* could not have been mere accurate transcripts of the original autographs. But, if they were not *transcripts*, they must have been *the autographs themselves*.

1. Accordingly, this conclusion perfectly agrees both with the whole context and with the evidently necessary tenor of Tertullian's argument.

The learned father sends a curious inquirer after doctrinal truth to the APOSTOLIC churches, rather than to any other churches which were not immediately founded by the apostles themselves. *Why* does he thus send him to the former, rather than to the latter? Because, in the APOSTOLIC churches, he might satisfy his curiosity by an actual inspection of the identical autographs of the apostles: whereas, in *other* churches *not* founded by the apostles, though he might meet with numerous transcripts made from these autographs, he would peradventure be disposed to question their strict accuracy. The various Achaian churches, for instance, would have transcripts of the two epistles to the Corinthians: but the autographs would be deposited with the APOSTOLIC church of Corinth. In a similar manner, the several churches of Macedon and proconsular Asia and Italy would have transcripts of the several epistles to the Philippians and Thessalonians and Ephesians and Romans: but the autographs would be deposited with the APOSTOLIC churches of Philippi and Thessalonica and Ephesus and Rome. Hence, says Tertullian to his inquirer, if you are in Macedon, you may resort to Philippi and Thessalonica; if in Italy, to Rome; if in Achaia, to Corinth; if in proconsular Asia, to Ephesus: for, in each of these APOSTOLIC churches, a privilege which churches *not* founded by the apostles are unable to claim, you will find the identical authentic letters, that is to say (as the sense imperiously requires), the identical autographs of the apostles themselves.

2. The present conclusion is confirmed, if it need any confirmation, by a subsequent phrase of Tertul-

lian, which occurs in the course of the same general passage.

In his character of a catholic as opposed to all innovating heretics, he speaks of possessing, from the very authors, the firm originals. *Habeo origines firmas ab ipsis autoribus*. Now, when both the argument and the entire context are considered, it is hard to say what he can mean by these *firm originals from the authors themselves*, if he do not mean the *apostolic autographs*.

II. The existence of the apostolic autographs, in the time of Tertullian, draws after it a very important philological consequence: namely, that the apostolic letters were originally written in Greek.

Tertullian repeatedly intimates, that St. Paul employed the Greek language in the composition of his epistles.* Now, this intimation might, in the abstract, be disputed: but, if the autographs of the apostles were in his time still preserved in the apostolic churches, any error on the part of such a man as Tertullian, in regard to the language of these autographs, seems well nigh impossible. For a mere mechanical inspection of the autographs would verify their language: and even if Tertullian had carelessly hazarded an inaccurate assertion in consequence of his never having seen the autographs *himself*, he must forthwith have learned his mistake from some one of the many persons who *had* inspected them; and, in that case, he would doubtless have corrected it. Or, at any rate, if *he* had neglected to make a formal retractation, we may be morally sure, that some *other* writer would have ex-

* Tertull. de Monog. § viii. p. 576. § xii. p. 580. Tertull. adv. Marcion. lib. v. § 33. p. 322.

posed his singular mistake: inasmuch as the autographs could not have existed to the end of the second century in those apostolic churches to which there was evidently a continual resort, without at the same time their particular language being known almost universally.

Hence, if I have proved, that the *ipsæ authenticæ literæ*, which a curious inquirer at the end of the second century could find *no where* save in the APOSTOLIC churches *alone*, must thence inevitably mean *the autographs of the apostles*: I have also proved, through the joint medium of that circumstance and the positive evidence of Tertullian, that the apostolic epistles were originally written in Greek.

III. I subjoin the Latin original, that the reader may form a better judgment respecting the propriety of the foregoing remarks.

Age jam qui voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuæ, percurrere ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ apostolorum suis locis præsidentur, apud quas ipsæ authenticæ literæ eorum recitantur, sonantes vocem, et repræsentantes faciem uniuscujusque. Proxima est tibi Achaia? Habes Corinthum. Si non longe es à Macedonia, habes Philippos, habes Thessalonicenses. Si potes in Asiam tendere, habes Ephesum. Si autem Italiæ adjaces, habes Romam, unde nobis quoque autoritas præsto est.

THE END.

